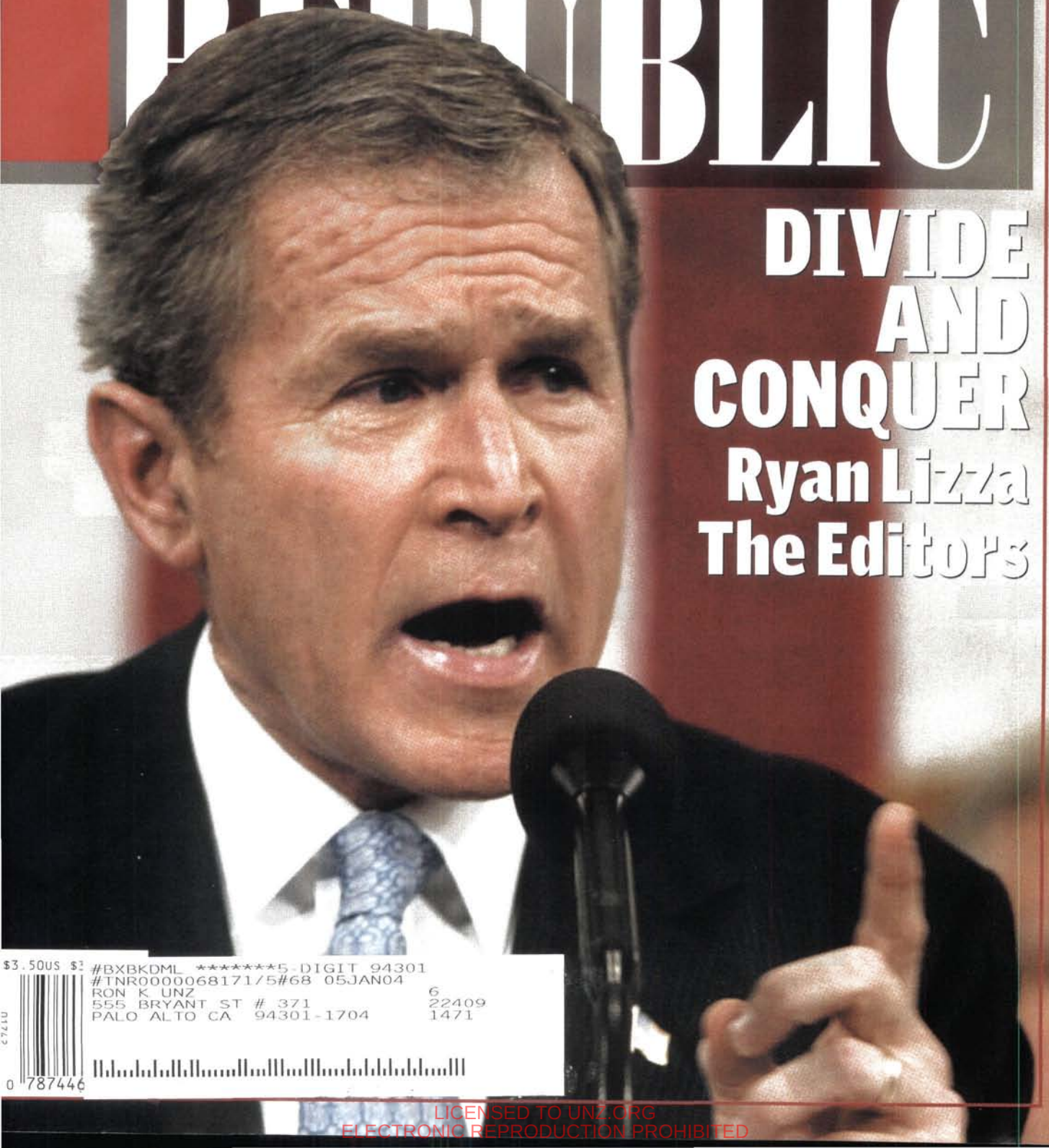
HOW TO REPEAL THE TAX CUT By Noam Scheiber

THE NEW REPUBLIC

DICTATORS AND NOVELS
By Enrique Krauze

DASCHLE AND GEPHARDT
By Michael Crowley



DIVIDE AND CONQUER
Ryan Lizza
The Editors

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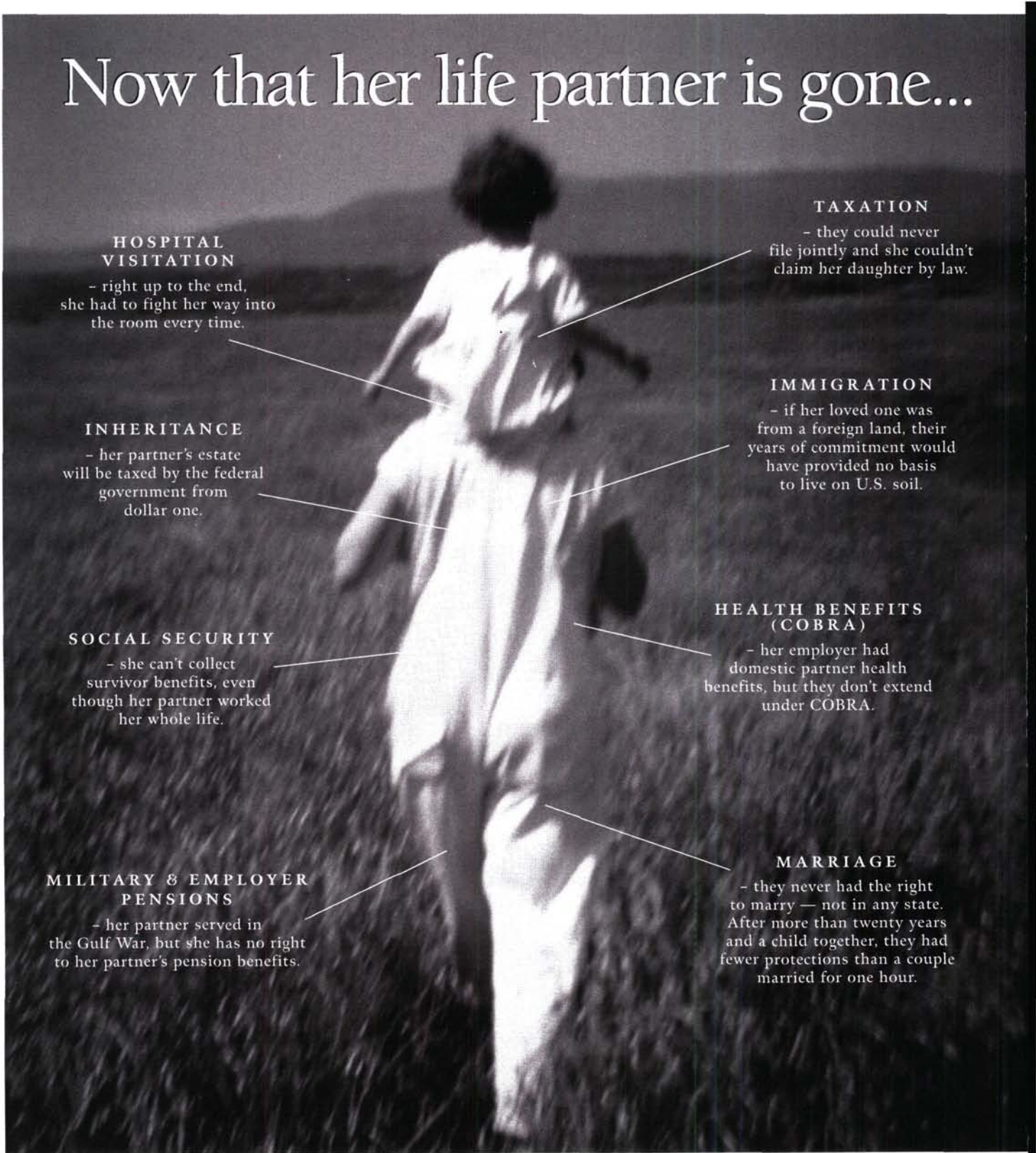
Now that her life partner is gone...



HOSPITAL VISITATION
– right up to the end, she had to fight her way into the room every time.

TAXATION
– they could never file jointly and she couldn't claim her daughter by law.

IMMIGRATION
– if her loved one was from a foreign land, their years of commitment would have provided no basis to live on U.S. soil.

INHERITANCE
– her partner's estate will be taxed by the federal government from dollar one.

HEALTH BENEFITS (COBRA)
– her employer had domestic partner health benefits, but they don't extend under COBRA.

SOCIAL SECURITY
– she can't collect survivor benefits, even though her partner worked her whole life.

MARRIAGE
– they never had the right to marry — not in any state. After more than twenty years and a child together, they had fewer protections than a couple married for one hour.

MILITARY & EMPLOYER PENSIONS
– her partner served in the Gulf War, but she has no right to her partner's pension benefits.

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Price of fame

TO THE EDITORS:

In his review of *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline,* Alan Wolfe accurately observes that op-ed pieces and book reviews are the virtual monopoly of professors and think-tank fellows ("The Fame Game," December 31, 2001 & January 7, 2002). Why is their raw intelligence considered by editors to be more valuable than the experience of practitioners? The current debate over ways to improve failing schools serves as a case in point. Teachers who struggle on a daily basis to reach poor and minority students are rarely provided a forum in newspapers and magazines. In contrast, celebrity public intellectuals are routinely granted the opportunity to weigh in, and the same names appear in print time and again. Apparently, in education, credentials earned away from the action trump hands-on expertise. This disparity is a telling commentary on the status of teachers, and it bodes ill for efforts to improve schools.

WALT GARDNER
Los Angeles, California

Baby talk

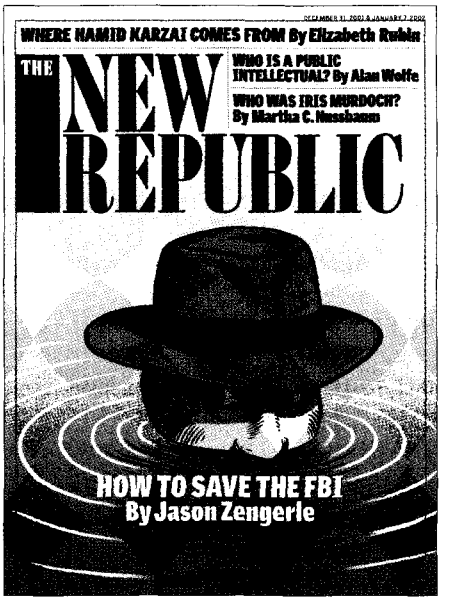
TO THE EDITORS:

The exchange prompted by Hope Roberts's November 19, 2001, Washington Diarist, "Push and Pull," elicited sweeping generalizations regarding labor and delivery (Correspondence, December 24, 2001). The notion that epidural anesthesia contributes significantly to the c-section rate is nonsense; this myth has largely been dispelled by recent research. Likewise, the assertion that c-section is harmful to fetuses is misleading. Labor is a serious undertaking, and although complications are rare, they may be catastrophic. C-section is generally safe and is often the appropriate mode of delivery. Pregnant women should be empowered to make informed choices based on the best available evidence. An ideological approach to medical decision-making is the last thing a pregnant woman needs.

JEREMY C. MILLER, M.D.
Assistant Clinical Professor of OB-GYN
George Washington University Hospital
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS:

According to Hope Roberts, the choice for a surgical birth is nothing more than a medical decision made to ensure the health and happiness of mother and child. But the epidemic of c-sections in the United States—27 percent of births here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THE NEW REPUBLIC
WHO IS A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL? By Alan Wolfe
WHO WAS IRIS MURDOCH? By Martha C. Nussbaum
HOW TO SAVE THE FBI
By Jason Zengerle

are accomplished surgically, while in most Western European countries, the rate is in the low teens—has less to do with medical necessity than with the habits of American obstetricians. It is also worth noting that c-sections don't buy us much in newborn well-being: The United States ranks twenty-third in the world for infant mortality. When Roberts says, "I chose to put my faith not in nature, but in my OB-GYN," she accepts a uniquely American view that women's bodies are not designed to give birth, and ignores the dangers that inhere in an overactive obstetrics.

CHARLOTTE A. DEVRIES
President
Lamaze International
Washington, D.C.

Care takers

TO THE EDITORS:

Jonathan Cohn makes some excellent observations regarding health care inflation ("Health Scare," December 24, 2001). Has he considered the irony of corporate America's own role in the runaway costs of its employees' health insurance? While big business is rushing to cut health benefits, it is, by its labor practices, contributing to a myriad of medical maladies suffered by its workforce, driving up health care costs. There is the mental toll of long hours (essentially "free" overtime put in by many salaried employees) without the job security taken for granted in the past. A 60-hour workweek (plus commuting time) leaves little time for either regular exercise or the proper preparation of healthy meals. When both husband and wife toil in "white-collar sweatshops" (often out of fear that at least one will be shown the door by age 50), the children then suffer from the health effects of excess work. The correlation between the "new" economy and negative health outcomes, such as the obesity and juvenile diabetes epidemics, can no longer be ignored.

BILL FRIEDMAN
Studio City, California

TO THE EDITORS:

Although Jonathan Cohn rejects high-deductible health insurance, we've seen that the "first-dollar coverage" of managed care is no bargain. Affordable protection against catastrophic costs is just what many rational purchasers seek. Deductibles on automobile or home-owner policies are popular because retaining some risk makes sense financially for many people. The problem with health insurance is confusion about who really pays for the coverage. Economists like Mark Pauly have shown that the cost of health benefits at work is borne by employees through reduced wages; savings from more affordable coverage would likewise accrue to them, not to the company.

Still, Americans rightly resent the imposition of any particular health care paradigm, be it managed care or (gasp!) paying for routine care out of pocket. We should require everyone to carry basic health insurance, but let individuals decide what type of coverage they prefer. The tax exclusion for benefits at work shackles employees to their bosses' choices; replacing it with individual income-based credits would allow all Americans to make the same cost-benefit decisions about insurance that they make about everything else they purchase.

THOMAS CAMPBELL JACKSON
Senior Fellow
Institute for SocioEconomic Studies
White Plains, New York

TO THE EDITORS:

As daunting as health care's financial problems are, even more problematic are the deficiencies in the health care system in general. A small sampling of failures: More than 30 million Americans with hypertension (high blood pressure) are either unaware of their condition or are inadequately treated for it; almost half of the people who suffer pain with terminal cancer die in pain; more than 11 million prescriptions for antibiotics are given annually to adults who have respiratory conditions for which antibiotics provide no benefit. These types of problems exist despite the fact that we spend almost twice as much per capita on health care as any other country in the world. President

continued on page 41

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Accounting

EVER SINCE THE Enron scandal broke, the air has been thick with sermons about the moral obligations of people in power. The myriad congressional hearings that began last week may lead to a new system for regulating derivatives, or new protections for 401(k)s. But what most Americans want from them is something more primal: for the corrupt big shots to pay. Which raises a question that has so far been largely overlooked: How should our political system punish Congressman Billy Tauzin?

The story of Tauzin's venality begins on April 6, 2000, when Arthur Levitt, then-chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), gave a speech before the Economic Club of Washington. For years Levitt had been watching developments in the accounting industry with mounting alarm. In 1981, management consulting and related services represented 13 percent of the revenues of America's five largest accounting firms. By 2000 it was 50 percent. And between 1993 and 1999, consulting revenues grew almost three times as fast as revenues from plain-old auditing. In 1999, The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) issued a manual entitled: "Make Audits Pay: Leveraging the Audit into Consulting Services."

Levitt considered it no coincidence that during the same period, the number of audited companies forced to restate their financial reports—which meant their auditors had falsely given them a clean bill of health—was rising: from 104 in 1997 to 118 in 1998 to 142 in 1999. And so, on April 6, he warned: "If the recent industry trends continue, I fear that the audit process—long rooted in independence and professionalism—may be diminished in the name of these increasingly lucrative and commercial opportunities." The SEC began drafting rules to prevent accounting firms from consulting for the companies they audited.

The accounting industry responded to Levitt's speech with buckets of cash—contributing more than $2.3 million to the parties and spending more than $7.2 million on lobbying in the second half of 2000. Arthur Andersen alone doubled its lobbying budget to $1.6 million. And a sizable chunk of that money went to Congressman Billy Tauzin of Louisiana, the Republican chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Since 1995 Tauzin had received close to $150,000 from accounting firms; and since 1989 he had taken in more from Andersen than had any other member of the House. When Andersen stepped up its lobbying in 2000, it hired one of Tauzin's former aides to help.

Tauzin didn't waste any time. Eleven days after Levitt's speech, he and two other Republican congressmen wrote the SEC chairman an extraordinary letter. Tauzin and his co-signers agreed there was a problem. But they didn't think the problem was with the accounting industry; they thought it was with the SEC. In response to a subsidiary Levitt proposal to limit accountants' ability to own stock in companies they audited, Tauzin & co. asked Levitt to "[e]stimate the number of violations that would exist if the stock restrictions applicable to the accounting profession *were to be applied to the SEC and its staff*" [my emphasis]. The congressmen ended the letter by informing Levitt that his responses to their questions would "help to determine if hearings on the SEC's oversight of the accounting profession are warranted."

It was a bald threat. But Levitt pushed on—holding four public hearings and garnering 2,000 comment letters on the proposed regulations over the summer of 2000. Then, on July 20, Tauzin sent him another letter, co-signed by 20 of his House Republican colleagues. This one sounded more reasonable; in fact, it dealt largely with process. The letter called Levitt's proposal "hurried" and "unacceptably rushed." "The 75-day comment period," it went on, "is excessively and unnecessarily short."

But to insiders, the message was far less innocuous. Since the 1960s, scandals had periodically led federal regulators to try to toughen the accounting industry's notoriously lax system of self-regulation. And every time they had, the industry had waited them out—delaying until more pliant politicians appointed more pliant regulators. As a former top AICPA official told *The Washington Post*, "the accounting profession has the same modus operandi every time a situation like this confronts them: That is they study the issue and they stall and study and hope that the issue over time goes away." In the summer of 2000, with a new president (and thus, a new SEC chairman) only six months away, the accounting industry had particular reason to delay. And so, on September 11, Tauzin wrote Levitt a third letter, suggesting that "the Commission should substantially extend the comment period, to permit greater participation by the public, by Congress and by *the new Administration*" [my emphasis]. Lynn Turner, then the SEC's chief accountant, says, "I knew the accounting firms helped them write those letters."

By fall it was clear Levitt would lose. Several senators and congressmen (Levitt won't name names, but it's a good bet Tauzin was among them) warned that if he didn't back off, Congress might cut the SEC's funding. Even Ken Lay registered his opposition, noting in a September 20 letter to Levitt that "Enron has successfully utilized its independent audit firm's expertise and professional skepticism to help improve the overall ... environment with the company." As Michigan Congressman John Dingell puts it: "The accounting industry got a bunch of people around here ... to just beat the living hell out of Arthur [Levitt], to threaten his budget and they intimidated him out of proceeding on the matter." By November, Levitt had settled for a measure that didn't stop the accounting industry's consulting work at all; it merely required that it be disclosed. And when President Bush took office, he named as his new head of the SEC Harvey Pitt, one of the lobbyists who had led the accounting industry's fight against Levitt's reforms. The battle, it seemed, was over for good.

Except that now, in an extraordinary twist, Enron's collapse has dredged it up again. The public is hungry for vengeance, and politicians are falling over one another to provide it. Last week Billy Tauzin opened hearings into Enron and Andersen by declaring, "This committee will cut no one any slack as we go forward."

But who stands in judgment of Billy Tauzin? Campaign finance reform may limit future abuses, but it does not provide accountability for past ones. For that, justice must come through politics. Billy Tauzin is today the deputy majority whip in the House of Representatives and the chairman of one of its most powerful committees. He should be a pariah. *The New York Times* should call for his resignation. The Democratic Party should make his defeat this fall a national crusade. If Billy Tauzin were hounded out of public life, it would be a hopeful sign for American politics. That may sound harsh or unrealistic. But a political system that doesn't punish legislators who betray the public trust can't expect their colleagues to behave any better in the future. Which is to say, it can't stop Enron from happening again.

PETER BEINART

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Free Speech

NOT SINCE "EVIL EMPIRE" has the most extreme term of moral disapprobation been used so appositely by a president as it was in George W. Bush's characterization of the regimes of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an "axis of evil." It has been the custom in recent years to describe these states that fail at everything but their arsenals as "rogue states," but that epithet obscures the full moral weight of their iniquities, and made them seem dangerous in only a naughty way, merely unclubbable. But these states are not just tyrannies. They are spectacularly dangerous tyrannies. They are playing with the worst fires known to man; and in the case of Iraq they have already loosed those fires upon soldiers and civilians. There is a terrible and incontrovertible basis in reality for the president's semantics of belligerence in his State of the Union address.

The president's rhetoric was the right one: "[T]ime is not on our side. I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer." That the dangers are gathering and the perils are drawing closer seems empirically plain. Bush's sterling sentences seem to indicate that the administration has grasped the strategic logic of the threat of Iraqi or Iranian or North Korean weapons of mass destruction: that the most effective action against such a threat is not retaliation, it is preemption. The destruction of such an arsenal and such a regime after such an arsenal has been used by such a regime would be a hollow victory. (Where the World Trade Center once stood, the success of Operation Enduring Freedom will always seem a little hollow.) There is no more bitter or more stupid standpoint on the problem of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons than hindsight.

It was heartening also to hear the president assail Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad in an almost platitudinous tone, as if it has become commonly understood in Washington that the Israeli struggle against terror and the American struggle against terror are varieties of the same struggle. And the president's mood of grim resolve and remorseless interventionism is a welcome change from the shallow belief in the salvific power of diplomacy that characterized his predecessor and characterizes also his secretary of state. The arguments of the hawks in the Bush administration appear to have found the highest ear. "Let's roll" is not exactly *Henry V*, but it is the right and splendid foreign policy.

So has the administration really and finally arrived at its Osirak moment? Alas, the president's speech did not dispel all the ambiguities. No sooner had he spoken his most ringing lines than he added these discouraging observations: "We will work closely with our coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction." But the problem of the "axis of evil" is not the problem of "terrorists and their sponsors"; and no coalition of any magnitude will ever support the United States in a preemptive action against Baghdad. And then the president moved on to "effective missile defenses," which we certainly will need, but mainly in the event that we do *not* act against Saddam Hussein.

The threat of weapons of mass destruction is not only a strategic threat, it is also a political threat. Indeed, it is primarily a political threat: it is posed by some regimes but not by others. The only adequate response to this menace, therefore, is a change of the menacing regime. In the absence of Saddam or a similar psychopath in power, the arsenal in Baghdad is merely a problem for the experts and the engineers of disarmament. But there was nothing in Bush's speech, not a syllable, to indicate that the administration is preparing to address the problem at the level of its cause. And if the administration has not yet accepted the political analysis of the strategic threat, then we have not advanced in our Iraq policy significantly beyond where we were a decade ago, when we stormed out of Desert Storm and left Saddam in peace and passed out the medals.

But then Richard Gephardt came along and put all skepticism about the administration into perspective. "We know," he asserted in demurral, "that real security depends not just on justice abroad, but creating good jobs at home." We know no such thing. This is lofty, poll-tested nonsense—the post-September version of the Democrats' old category mistake. Good jobs at home, yes, yes, a thousand times yes; but no missile loaded with no canister of germs will ever be deterred by full employment. Real security means *real security*. ■

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NOTEBOOK

FACT CHECKS: Some parts of President Bush's State of the Union address were groundbreaking: his tough new line on Iran, for instance. Others were depressingly familiar—for example, his ongoing efforts to rewrite the history of his tax cut. "[S]ome thought it was too big," he said. "But when the checks arrived in the mail, most Americans thought tax relief was just about right." The "checks," of course, are the $300 rebates, which were both the most popular element of the tax cut and the part that did the most to stimulate the economy. On Tuesday, Bush yet again painted himself as the champion of those rebates, and—implicitly—cast Democrats as the foes. But the truth is just the opposite. Democrats first suggested sending out immediate tax rebates to stimulate the economy. And when they did, Republicans generally scoffed. "Republicans are comparing this latest proposal from Democrats as basically flying over the country and throwing $100 bills out of an airplane," reported CNN last March. "Their argument is that it is bad policy to talk about a one-time, $300 per person rebate, because it won't do anything to stimulate the economy." Bush eventually agreed to the rebate, but only as a condition for accepting his long-term tax-cut plan. Ever since, Bush has used the rebates to deflect attention from the largest element of his plan: the rate cuts, most of which have yet to take effect, and which mainly benefit the well-to-do. Bush's twisted economic logic is all the more stark when compared with his crystal-clear reasoning on foreign policy. He can honestly represent his positions on foreign policy because they command the support of the public. He misrepresents his position on economics because they don't.

GREAT MOMENTS IN P.R.: "Iran, Iraq and North Korea on Wednesday rejected an accusation by President Bush that they form an 'axis of evil' developing weapons of mass destruction to threaten America and the world."—Reuters, January 30

DEPARTMENT OF CHICKEN LITTLES: "NASA ISSUES ALERT ON FALLING SATELLITE DEBRIS"—*The Miami Herald*, January 30

HOW GREEN IS MY TASK FORCE?: Watching the White House defend its energy plan and its stonewalling of the General Accounting Office in recent weeks, a less-than-careful observer might be surprised at how dependable an ally the administration has found in the Sierra Club. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer invoked the nation's most respected environmental group on January 22, when reporters pestered him about meetings between the task force and Enron: "The president thinks that access should be across the board. And that's why the Sierra Club, for example, as you know, met repeatedly with the energy task force." A week later it was Dick Cheney's turn. "Let's talk about undue influence for a minute," Cheney lectured an NBC reporter. "The Sierra Club put out a set of energy policy recommendations—twelve points. Our energy recommendations put out by our task force includes eleven of those. Now, were we unduly influenced by the Sierra Club? Of course not." Of course not, indeed. But there are reasons for this. First, Fleischer's misrepresentations notwithstanding, meetings between the White House and Sierra Club officials took place only *after* the task force had released its energy report, not when it was actually formulating policy. And as for Cheney's comment, the Sierra Club says it's "simply not true." Not only does the Sierra Club hate the Bush energy plan, it has been running ads against Bush, and it is suing the White House, demanding that Cheney turn over his task force records. With friends like these...

THE PENTAGON
NO, I'M PRETTY SURE YOU CAN'T HAVE AN ACCOUNTING SCANDAL UNLESS YOU ACTUALLY HAVE AN ACCOUNTANT.
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MAKES YOU WONDER WHICH PARTS WERE PUT IN AT THE BEHEST OF THE CANDLE-MAKERS LOBBY: "You know, the very document that protects our liberties more than anything else, the Constitution, was, of course, drafted in total secrecy."—White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, defending the administration's refusal to make public documents relating to the energy task force, January 28

A JOB WELL DONE: It should come as no surprise that Jesse Jackson has shamelessly inserted himself into the Enron scandal, jetting to Houston this week to hold prayer vigils for laid-off Enron employees and then taking a busload of them to Washington to appeal to the Bush administration for financial help. Jackson, after all, is a publicity hog of the first order. Who cares if he has no real connection to Enron? That's where the cameras are! But with Enron, Jackson's shamelessness has reached a new level, because he actually *does* have an Enron connection. As a spokeswoman for the bankrupt company revealed to *The New York Times* this week, Enron made a small donation to the Houston chapter of Jackson's organization, Rainbow/PUSH, two years ago (neither Enron nor Rainbow/PUSH has divulged exactly how "small"). Which may go a long way toward explaining Jackson's forgiving attitude toward Enron's former CEO Ken Lay. While Jackson has lambasted President Bush and Vice President Cheney about Enron's collapse, he has not gone after Lay. Indeed, Jackson has actually defended the former CEO. "Now he appears to be focused in his search for information and his search for answers," Jackson recently said of Lay. This week while he was in Houston, Jackson even went so far as to pray with Lay and compared the former CEO to Job. Of course, if you really want a Job-like struggle, just try to get Jackson to return that donation from Enron.

JFK WOULD BE PROUD: Time was, the GOP advertised its contempt for highbrow culture with periodic promises to abolish the National Endowment for the Arts. But, as in so many other areas of policy, the Bush administration has come up with a stealthier means to the same end, appointing 1980s sex symbol Bo Derek to a much-desired five-and-a-half-year term on the governing board of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Derek's career is, of course, an inspiration to performing artists everywhere. After dropping out of high school, she married erotic photographer John Derek (she was 18; he was 47), and proceeded to disrobe with metronomic regularity for *Playboy* and a series of otherwise unmemorable movies of the late 1970s and early '80s. (In 1990, she won the Golden Raspberry award for worst actress of the '80s—and that was at the height of Brooke Shields's career!) According to *BusinessWeek*, Derek is now a "pet-care-product entrepreneur." We're reasonably certain how her appointment to the Kennedy Center board would be explained had it been bestowed by the previous president. In George W.'s case, we'll just have to chalk it up to execrable taste.

THANK YOU FOR CATCHING THE TERRORISTS.
SAUDI ARABIA
BUT MANY ARE SAUDI CITIZENS.
AND WE WANT THEM BACK SO WE CAN PUNISH THEM.
BY EXPELLING THEM FROM SAUDI ARABIA.
AGAIN.
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HUH?: "I think what [President Bush] did tonight [in the State of the Union address] was clearly attempt to turn the focus away from the war on terrorism, to some extent, and towards something which might turn those poll numbers down for him and that is the economy, which doesn't look so good."—Claire Shipman, "ABC News," January 29 ■

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Why politicians still love Greenspan.

Idle Worship

By JONATHAN CHAIT

DURING THE 1990S boom, Alan Greenspan was considered almost superhuman—a crinkled sorcerer whose cryptic words wielded magical power over the markets. But as the economy slid into recession a year ago, Wall Street grew increasingly immune to Greenspan's hypnotic sway, and the financial world began to turn on him. "A stream of disappointing profit announcements, and growing worries about what lies ahead, are undermining confidence in the powers of Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve," noted *The Economist* last February. "Perhaps the real problem was the world placed too much faith in Greenspan all along," William Dudley, chief economist at Goldman Sachs, told *The Financial Times*. "In the end, no one is superhuman." Wall Street certainly doesn't consider Greenspan an idiot, but his reputation, like the stock market, has undergone a serious correction. He may be respected, but no longer is he worshiped.

The news of Greenspan's fall, though, has not reached Washington. Here, things go on as before, as if the curtain had never been pulled back from the Wizard of Oz. The Fed chairman's continued esteem can be measured by his periodic trips to Capitol Hill, where assembled members of Congress ritualistically prostrate themselves before him. The sessions resemble a kind of game wherein each member of Congress beseeches Greenspan to endorse his or her views, even on matters on which Greenspan lacks authority or expertise. Any idea the Fed chairman approves immediately takes on the aura of unassailable truth.

If ever the time had come for Congress to abandon its Greenspan veneration, it would have been last week. Greenspan's testimony before the Senate Budget Committee last Thursday came just a day after Congressional Budget Office projections showed that the federal budget would run deficits for the next several years. And these deficits are due in part to Greenspan's own advice. A year before, he had testified in favor of large tax cuts by painting a fantastic scenario: Projected surpluses would soon grow so huge that the national debt would disappear completely. That would leave the government with a terrible choice: cut taxes and increase spending all at once (which would overheat the economy) or, worse, use surplus revenue to buy up private industry (which would amount to socialism). A large tax cut, he concluded, was the only way to prevent fiscal calamity.

Greenspan's advice was akin to a doctor urging an overweight person who has lost a couple of pounds to stop exercising lest he die of emaciation. To begin with, the notion that members of Congress would allow a massive surplus to accumulate for years on end without sending any of it back to their constituents is bizarre. And recent events have so dramatically contradicted Greenspan's scenario that it may well go down as one of the dumbest economic predictions in

CHRISTOPHE VORLET

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The Palestinian Identity

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and acting director of the partment of Journalism at Boston University.

On a clear March night in 1986, accompanied by a young Palestinian lawyer named Jonathan Kutaeb, I drove from Jerusalem to Nablus to pay respects to the family of Zafir el-Masri. El-Masri had been assassinated by a Palestinian fanatic for daring to cooperate with Israel by serving as mayor of an important town. But the Palestinians attending his funeral treated him as a hero.

Because of his unique standing, the Israel Defense Forces held back, allowing the funeral to become an emotional display of national sentiment. Illegal Palestinian banners were waved wildly. Masked celebrants chanted their allegiance to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). El-Masri's shroud was passed from hand to hand above a crowd pulsating with energy.

On the drive to Nablus, my friend Jonathan tried to put the significance of el-Masri's funeral into words. **"Palestinians have always relied on some outside force to deliver us from occupation.** First it was the pan-Arabism of Nasser and Assad. Then the Russians. Then the PLO from its bases in Lebanon. Then the Americans after Camp David. Now we know that by asserting our identity we must deliver ourselves."

When the first intifada erupted more than a year later, I was back in the states, covering the Pentagon. From afar, I felt great sympathy for the Palestinian people and little for Israeli settlement policies. Israel, in my view, had vital security interests in the West Bank and Gaza, the foremost of which was a Palestinian community that accepted Israel's right to exist. Settlements whose defense required a stifling, humiliating military presence were obstacles to real security.

Oslo would later seem a triumph of reason over ruin. The principle of mutual recognition could succeed selfish, destructive obsessions with national destinies. Israel could return to its central mission of providing a haven for world Jewry while the Palestinians could build a nation reflecting their values and character.

Instead, today there is heartbreak. And this time blame for the failure rests almost totally with the Palestinians. Yes, the settlements have expanded. But this Palestinian uprising began as many settlements were being negotiated away by a prime minister who had staked his political life on true compromise.

Far more troublesome is the evident mentality of the Palestinian community. Does a man who blows his body to bits for the transcendent joy of killing a score of Jewish teenagers accept the humanity, let alone the statehood, of his victims? **When a third of all Palestinians identify the terrorist Hamas organization as their preferred political vehicle, are they ready to administer the holy city of Jerusalem side by side with Israelis?** When their teachers and mullahs argue the falsity of the Holocaust and the truth of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, can one believe the Palestinians have any peace to trade for land?

As I recall the drive to Nablus nearly sixteen years ago, part of me still yearns for the Palestinians to affirm their identity. Another part of me fears they have already done so.

— Robert Zelnick

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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American history. Last week's testimony, therefore, seemed like a natural occasion for Congress to abandon its reverential ways. "When Greenspan appears this week before the Senate Budget Committee," predicted *The Washington Post*, "he may face tough questions from Democrats about his testimony a year ago."

KENT CONRAD, THE Budget Committee chairman and the Senate's most dogged fiscal scold, opened the hearings by invoking the collapse of the surplus. "Last year, Chairman Greenspan, you testified that we were in danger of paying off the debt too quickly," he observed. For a moment it appeared that Conrad would call Greenspan to task. But in the very next sentence, he veered away. "And while you sounded cautionary notes and sent many signals in your testimony that we've got to be careful not to return to deficits and debt," he continued, "unfortunately very few in this town paid much attention to your cautionary notes." (It should come as no surprise that nobody paid attention to Greenspan's cautionary notes, because *everything* he says comes attached with cautionary notes.) In Conrad's telling, the problem wasn't that Congress heeded Greenspan's advice, but that it didn't heed his advice carefully enough. What fools we mortals be!

Conrad went on to quote Greenspan last year praising the economic benefits of debt reduction. "I believe you were right then, and you're right now to make that point," he said. Then the senator reached his primary theme: an appeal for Greenspan to endorse a budget "trigger"—a device to cancel tax cuts if surpluses dwindle—a proposal Conrad is desperately pushing. "[Y]ou warned us that budget projections are highly uncertain, and you urged us to have a plan to protect surpluses and debt reduction. You suggested something like a trigger. We did not follow that advice, regrettably . . . ," Conrad implored. "[P]erhaps you can give us counsel on how we best do that now."

But even this was not quite reverent enough for some of Conrad's colleagues. His oblique reference to Greenspan's misguided counsel had left an opening. And the next speaker, Republican Pete Domenici, pounced on it. "Some of my colleagues may try to get you to apologize or issue some sort of mea culpa for your testimony last year," Domenici told Greenspan. "But the way I see it, we are now in exactly the fiscal situation you suggested we should be in." Conrad—perhaps fearing that he was being outflanked—scrambled back to safer turf, once again imploring Greenspan to endorse a trigger. And Greenspan complied.

The rest of the hearing was dominated by other senators pleading with the Fed chairman to smile upon their sundry causes. Chuck Hagel tried to win an endorsement of a tax-cut-laden stimulus bill. (Greenspan replied skeptically.) Ron Wyden asked about a tax credit for displaced workers. (Greenspan replied vaguely.) Wayne Allard fished for a denunciation of excessive spending and the capital gains tax. (Greenspan heartily concurred.)

The hearings ended, and the press reported them as a success for the Democrats: Greenspan had expressed doubt about the stimulus bill, and he had endorsed a trigger. Instead of pointing out how wrong Greenspan was last year, the Democrats had tried to use his testimony this year to undo the damage—all the while feverishly denying that he bore any responsibility for that damage at all. Conrad quickly distributed a press release trumpeting his victory: "SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CONRAD WELCOMES FED CHAIRMAN'S CALL FOR TRIGGER MECHANISM." The press release quotes Greenspan recommending a trigger, followed by Conrad replying, "I agree with you, Chairman Greenspan. . . ." And if Greenspan agrees with you, you must be right. ■

Timbuktu Dispatch

Deserted

By MICHAEL RUBIN

AS WE WALKED along Timbuktu's sandy streets, past mud mosques and houses, warm winds from the Sahara whipped dust over the city, obscuring the sun and stinging my eyes. The wind did not bother my guide Muhammad, however. He wore sunglasses and a turban, shielding himself from sun, sand, and anything else the desert might throw at the residents of this increasingly tense and depressed city.

When President Clinton visited neighboring Senegal and nearby Ghana in 1998, Africans across the region heard him declare that "the United States is ready to help you." *The New York Times* opined that Clinton's "journey is a fine opportunity . . . to show that America's support for democracy and development in Africa needs to be taken seriously." And many in Mali hoped it would. After all, Malians had overthrown a corrupt dictatorship in 1991 and organized multiparty democratic elections the following year. Perhaps even more impressive given many African countries' post-cold-war tendency to backslide into dictatorship, Mali held another democratic election in 1997. President Alpha Oumar Konare won a second term in balloting that international observers deemed fair. According to Freedom House's 2001-2002 "Freedom in the World" survey, Mali ranked as the only completely free country in the Islamic world.

But despite the best efforts of Konare and his people, the "new African renaissance" that Clinton promised on his March 1998 tour has not arrived in Mali. And September 11, ironically, makes it less likely that the United States will live up to its promises to help build it. For while the United States reaches out to African dictatorships like Sudan in hopes that they will mend their terrorism-supporting ways, African democracies—majority-Muslim ones like Mali included—are being ignored. It's a shortsighted strategy, and it may be leading moderate African Muslims to

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It Can Be Done...

It Should Be Done

As Congress renews the debate over prescription drug coverage for American seniors, we reaffirm our support for creating a meaningful coverage benefit.

What is the measure of a meaningful benefit?

It must provide "choice" ... fully assist the poorest seniors ... spur competition ... include access to all medicines ... foster, not frustrate, drug research ... and permit those seniors who already have drug coverage — to keep it.

Prescription drug coverage for seniors? It can be done ... It should be done!

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other—less moderate—alternatives.

Not long ago, American officials liked to talk about Mali. In October 1996, when Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited the country, he explained that "Mali was chosen, frankly, because of the tremendous progress made in some of the most difficult conditions in all of Africa." (In order for Christopher to visit a Peace Corps camp on his trip, Mali had to grade an entire road.) Three years later Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spent 18 hours in the country. She praised Mali's participation in peacekeeping efforts, and announced a $2 million scholarship for women and girls. The Grand Hotel in Bamako proudly displays a photograph of Albright alongside a letter from the local U.S. Embassy calling Albright's visit a "complete success."

The Clinton administration wasn't above patting itself on the back for its commitment to Africa. Speaking in Nigeria on October 20, 1999, Albright bragged, "I believe that our administration has spent more time, attention, and money on Africa than any other administration." But in Mali, those efforts don't look quite so impressive. Mali remains one of the world's ten poorest nations. In 2000 the United States imported less than $10 million in goods from the country. According to the Congressional Research Service, U.S. development assistance to Mali in fiscal year 2001 was just $33.7 million. Not surprisingly, therefore, Mali's citizens are growing cynical about American speechifying. Colin Powell visited Mali last May; but speaking to me at the National Museum in Bamako, a local resident named Amadou didn't seem overly impressed. "Of course there was great anticipation [of the various visits]. But people were expecting much more." Muhammad, standing near the dunes of the Sahara, was blunter. "They promise and promise and promise, but never do anything."

In its despair, Mali has begun looking elsewhere. Libyan strongman Muammar Qaddafi has financed Bamako's high-profile Islamic Center. In 1999 the Malian foreign ministry thanked Iran for its assistance in building mosques and bridges. And a survey by the European Union's aid liaison with the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group found that the King Fahd Bridge—which is used by most traffic in Bamako—is the foreign aid project most recognized by Malians.

Along with such financial aid comes cultural influence. The puritanical version of Islam financed by Saudi Arabia—Wahhabism—is gaining ground here. According to one supporter of the current government, in 1998 Islamic fundamentalists marched through the streets of the religiously diverse capital city of Bamako demanding the government close restaurants and bars during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, when observant Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Residents of Bamako and Timbuktu told me of similar Wahhabi activity in the city of Gao that was reportedly financed with Saudi money.

Such sympathies aren't hard to spot. Stalls throughout Bamako's main market sell Islamist literature published in Saudi Arabia. Just down the street from the capital's artisan market, where tourists flock to buy masks, mud cloth, and drums, lies the office of the Voix du Coran (Voice of the Koran) radio station, founded in 1993 by the Malian Association for the Promotion of Islam—although nearby merchants say it's funded by Saudi Arabia. Portraits of Osama bin Laden cost just a few cents and hang in storefronts across from the main mosque. In another storefront, in the center of town, hang brightly painted Iraqi flags. In the city of Djenne, whose weekly market attracts traders from across the region, merchants discussed a report that, in early January near the northern Nigerian city of Zaria, a pregnant teen who claimed she had been raped by her uncle was buried up to her neck and stoned to death—in keeping with an extreme Wahhabi interpretation of Islamic law.

For his part, Muhammad keeps his distance from Wahhabism's spreading influence. Walking with me in Timbuktu, Muhammad told me of his six years studying Islam in Mecca: "The Saudis are not good Muslims. All they do is talk about Islam and drink whiskey." While Tuaregs (a largely nomadic people spread across the Sahara in Mali, Algeria, Libya, and Niger) like Muhammad consider themselves white, many have dark skin and, like other Africans and non-Arabs, are frequently harassed by the police while in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, in a country where per capita income is less than $250 per year and only one-third of the population is literate, few Malians have Muhammad's broader perspective. Hordes of unemployed youth line the streets to hear preachers' promises of a better life, and they see results. In Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso's second-largest city, not far from the Malian border, a mullah at a local mosque offered to pay for my Catholic guide's wedding if he would accept Islam.

Throughout the Muslim world, the United States is facing a new ideological Iron Curtain. But, ironically, while the Bush administration coddles Muslim dictatorships and theocracies like Sudan and Saudi Arabia, which spread hatred of the United States, it is putting nascent and impoverished Muslim democracies out to pasture. Sixteen-year-old Issa, an English student who has never ventured outside Timbuktu, no longer even expects much from the country whose language he is studying. "At the very least," he says, "they [Washington] shouldn't make promises they can't keep." ■

Don't be afraid of the euro.

Purchasing Power

By John B. Judis

The euro's launch on January first of this year didn't make the cover of a single major American business magazine. The New Republic's own Andrew Sullivan summed up the prevailing view on this side of the Atlantic: It was a "substantive non-event." Those who didn't ignore the euro altogether predicted its dramatic failure. George Will declared that it "will not 'work,' even understanding that narrowly as producing economic efficiency." And *National*

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Journal columnist Clive Crook compared Europe's adoption of the euro to Argentina's "adventures in monetary union." The ridicule was near unanimous.

It was also probably wrong. In fact, the euro's launch could easily prove the most important economic event of the decade. While it may not invigorate Germany's slumping service sector or turn Naples into a post-industrial metropolis, it could solve some of the continent's most deep-seated economic problems and put Europe on a path toward sustained growth. And if it does, the euro's introduction may dramatically alter the balance of economic power between the United States and Europe. In years to come, Americans could even look back wistfully on the first of this year as the moment when world economic leadership began to pass quietly from the United States of America to the united states of Europe.

THE EURO WILL benefit Europe's economies by making cross-border trade and investment a lot easier and a lot more attractive. For centuries, European nations have done much of their trade with each other, but they have been hampered by tolls, tariffs, and competing currencies. And while the formation of the Common Market in 1958 began to knock down trade barriers, it did nothing to eliminate the inefficiencies caused by currency differences: Banks, businesses, and individuals still had to swap currencies—which meant paying transaction costs—to exchange goods and services. In addition, businesses planning investments or contracting for goods in other European nations had to guess whether fluctuating exchange rates would alter the values of their investments or purchases. Every investment entailed a hidden risk. The euro eliminates both that uncertainty and those transaction costs. According to Daniel Gros and Niels Thygesen, authors of *European Monetary Integration*, the savings could run as high as 2 percent of total GDP—or about $150 billion in 2001.

Moreover, Crook's comparisons notwithstanding, the euro will actually *protect* the nations of the European Union (EU) from Argentina's fate. Argentina's economy went into a tailspin precisely because it fixed its currency inexorably to the U.S. dollar after joining a free-trade zone, Mercosur, with countries whose currencies were *not* pegged to the dollar. When Brazil, one of the Mercosur countries, devalued its currency, the Brazilian real, against the dollar in 1999, Brazil's exports became cheaper and Argentina's more expensive. Argentina's trade deficit grew, fueling unemployment and setting the stage for last December's collapse. Thanks to the euro, the same thing can't happen to the members of the EU's free-trade zone—because they use the same currency. Italy, in other words, can't devalue its currency at Spain's expense (or vice versa).

Other critics argue that since the euro countries now share a common interest rate and must limit deficit spending to 3 percent of GDP under EU rules, countries suffering high unemployment during a recession won't be able to use fiscal or monetary policy to stimulate their economies. This ignores the fact that the EU's deficit-spending rules contain loopholes for such an eventuality. But more importantly, it ignores the fact that while this may be a problem, it would have been a problem even without the euro. After all, running deficits to fight unemployment has never been a trouble-free proposition: Countries that did so in the pre-euro regime risked sparking a run on their currency. And the adoption of the euro creates a new way for EU nations to fight unemployment, enabling them to do what the New Deal accomplished for the United States in the 1930s. To combat the Great Depression, the U.S. government used unemployment insurance to transfer income (and consumer demand) from low-unemployment states in the North to high-unemployment states in the Deep South. Similarly, EU economists—thanks to the union's new common currency—are now considering continent-wide unemployment programs that would transfer funds from low-unemployment countries in the North to high-unemployment countries in the South.

BUT THE EURO'S impact will be felt in the United States as well—because it may come at the expense of the dollar. Through the euro, European countries could come to enjoy the power and economic advantage that the United States gained when the dollar became the world's currency. In 1944 the Bretton Woods conference fixed the dollar as the official international currency—pegged at $35 for an ounce of gold—and set values for all other currencies in relation to it. And though the United States abandoned the Bretton Woods system in 1971 and let the dollar float in relation to other currencies, the dollar has continued to function as the main international reserve currency, as well as the most common currency for trade and investment. Countries that do not accept escudos or krona as payment usually accept dollars, and keep dollars in their central bank as a reserve fund in case of a financial crisis.

The dollar's unique status has helped lubricate world trade, but it has also bestowed particular advantages on the United States. As long as countries are willing to keep dollars as their reserve currency, the United States can run huge current-account deficits (about $400 billion in 2000) without being subject to the fiscal discipline that other nations must endure. (The "current account" consists of whatever Americans spend on foreign goods and services—including spending by military and other government operations abroad—minus whatever foreigners spend on our goods and services.) If Thailand, for example, runs current-account deficits in its baht, it has to counteract that through some combination of raising its interest rates, devaluing its currency, and cutting its budget—any of which could cause recession. But the United States can run such deficits without its currency coming under attack because the dollar is the world's currency. Countries don't want to unload their dollars; they want to hold onto them. So while the United States may occasionally face pressures to raise its interest rates or cut its budget, as it did in the late 1970s, the pressures are much less severe than those faced by other countries. As a result, the United States can simultaneously be the world's greatest debtor and its most prosperous country.

Since the 1960s, European countries have bristled at the

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dollar's privileged position. During the Vietnam War, Europeans worried that the dollars accumulating in their banks were causing inflation and enabling Americans to buy up European firms. Indeed, the United States left the gold standard in 1971, partly in response to French attempts to cash in their dollars for gold. Since then, European nations have gradually taken steps to cushion their national currencies from fluctuations in the dollar. In 1978 German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing proposed a European Monetary System that would fix the value of European currencies in relation to each other; in 1992 the EU countries decided at Maastricht to launch the European Monetary Union and the euro; in 1999 the currencies of all the EU nations became convertible to euros at a fixed rate; and this year those currencies were replaced by the euro.

Americans may be oblivious to a threat from the euro, but Europeans envisage it eventually rivaling or even displacing the dollar as the world currency. In a typical article last month heralding the "coming of Europe," *Die Zeit* economic columnist Wilfried Von Herz looked forward to the euro becoming the international "key currency." To be sure, that's not likely to happen anytime soon. Today only about 13 percent of international reserves are held in euros, compared with 68 percent for dollars. But if European firms remain competitive, the preconditions do exist for the euro to reach parity eventually. In the three years since it was introduced on a limited basis in 1999, the euro has come to be used in 35 percent of all international transactions (compared to 45 percent for the dollar). It is being widely circulated in Eastern Europe and in the three EU countries—Britain, Sweden, and Denmark—that have yet to join the euro bloc but are under increasing pressure to do so. Assuming they will eventually join, along with Eastern Europe, the euro's potential strength will lie in the size of its market: In 1999 the GDP of the European Union accounted for 20.3 percent of world output, compared to 21.9 percent for the United States; and its exports accounted for 39.3 percent, compared to 14 percent for the United States. Its population, even before the admission of Eastern Europe, is one-third larger.

If the euro does come to rival the dollar, the euro countries would reap the rewards. They, too, could export their capital around the globe and even run trade deficits without fearing the immediate devaluation of their currency. They could insulate themselves from the effects of American fiscal and monetary policy: If, for example, the United States raised interest rates, they might not have to immediately follow suit in order to defend their currencies. And they could persuade countries that now price their goods in dollars—including the Middle Eastern oil producers—to price them in euros. That would not only eliminate transaction costs, but also allow Europe to establish an independent relationship with OPEC. And these gains for the euro would be losses for the dollar. If the dollar were no longer the universal world currency, the United States would suddenly feel pressure to rein in its foreign debts for fear of suffering a loss in the dollar's value. And as occurred during the Vietnam War—when American military expenditures abroad caused soaring current-account deficits—the United States might have to worry much more about the cost of military operations overseas.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, a silver lining to this potential cloud on the American horizon. If the euro winds up matching the dollar in international importance, it just might foster a more stable international economy, and that would benefit the United States as much as anyone. During the last two centuries, as the eminent economist historian Charles Kindleberger has argued, global economic stability has depended on the existence of an all-powerful currency. The decline of the English pound, for example, was a factor in the onset and persistence of the Great Depression. And since the United States abandoned the gold standard in 1971, the world's economy has slowed and has suffered periodic currency crises—Mexico in 1994, Thailand in 1997, Russia in 1998, and Argentina last year—that have threatened political stability in key regions of the globe. There is little chance that the United States will regain the absolute economic supremacy it enjoyed after World War II—when it exported roughly twice as many goods as it imported, and when not just Latin America, but Western Europe and Japan, desperately sought greenbacks. And if the United States is unlikely to ever again enjoy that kind of economic superiority, it's even less likely that Europe or Japan ever could.

But that doesn't mean the world is condemned to instability. The euro's rise may actually make it easier to create what former Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin has called a new "global financial architecture." If in the past a system of fixed or managed exchange rates required a single dominant currency, but today no currency can do the job, the best alternative may be two dominant currencies rather than a cacophony of competing ones. The euro's rise could essentially narrow the field to it and the dollar, with the yen and the Chinese yuan playing supporting roles. If those four parties cooperated, there's at least a chance the world could return to a fixed exchange-rate regime. In the best-case scenario, a new financial architecture of this kind could rule out the kind of financial crises, precipitated by currency speculation, that have plagued Latin America and Southeast Asia.

The euro's success could also confer one other lasting benefit on the United States and the world. European leaders have always viewed economic integration as a step toward greater democratic political integration—toward what Jean Monnet first called a "United States of Europe." Political integration (which is slated to include Eastern Europe this decade) could prevent the reemergence of the national rivalries that led to centuries of war, culminating in the world wars of the twentieth century. It would also provide the United States, which has been allied with Western Europe since 1945, with a more powerful democratic partner—one with which Americans would quarrel at times, but which would share an overriding commitment to democracy that, say, China or Russia do not. If a stronger democratic Europe emerges from this avalanche of new bank notes, America's opinion leaders will not only eventually take notice; they may even smile. ■

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Jerusalem Dispatch

September's Children

By Yossi Klein Halevi

On September 11 some of Israel's top security experts were, as it happened, in New Delhi. They had just concluded a day of deliberations on global terrorism and missile defense with their Indian counterparts when the news arrived. As the Israelis and the Indians speculated about the identity of the culprits and the implications of the attacks, the emerging bond between the two frontline anti-terrorist nations found its emotional moment. "In everyone's mind," noted one Indian participant, "was the thought that now the world will finally understand the terrorist threat we faced."

Over the following weeks India and Israel grew even closer, bound by the common grievance of being excluded from the anti-terrorist coalition while Washington courted their terrorist-harboring enemies. And while American overtures toward both countries have since tempered their outrage, their worldviews have continued to converge, especially after the December 13 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament. Indeed, New Delhi's demands that Pakistan uproot its terrorist infrastructure almost seem borrowed from Ariel Sharon.

But the growing affinity between India and Israel is not merely strategic. It stems from more than a fear of terrorism or a struggle against radical Islam. It is also cultural: The mutual attraction of two Asian democracies, born around the same time in traumatic partition attempts, rooted in religious culture but devoted to secularism. Israel and India—countries with a 40-year history of suspicion and ill will—increasingly view one another not simply as sharing a common enemy, but a common purpose. So when the world changed on September 11, each knew exactly where to turn.

India's hostility to Zionism dates from the 1920s, when the leaders of its independence movement, trying to solidify a Hindu-Islamic alliance against Britain, sided with the Arabs over Palestine. Mahatma Gandhi set the tone. Palestine, he wrote in 1938, "belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French." In an anguished letter in 1939, the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber pleaded: "You, Mahatma Gandhi, who know of the connection between tradition and future, should not associate yourself with those who pass over our cause without understanding or sympathy." The appeal had no effect. Gandhi remained hostile to the Jewish return, and India voted against the UN partition of Palestine in 1947. India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, a close ally of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, helped define the nonalignment bloc's reflexive anti-Israel stance.

Not until the collapse of the Soviet Union, India's ally and the leader of the international campaign to delegitimize Israel, followed by the 1991 Middle East peace conference in Madrid—which further enhanced Israel's diplomatic standing—did India allow full diplomatic relations. The 1998 rise to power of the Hindu nationalist party, BJP—a party less beholden to the nonaligned movement's foreign policy traditions than the long-serving Congress—also furthered the rapprochement. But as recently as the late 1990s the relationship remained tentative. Indian security experts would slip into Israel, hoping to avoid publicity that could upset India's Muslims and jeopardize the country's still-close relations with the Arab world.

Today, however, hardly a week passes without a well-publicized military delegation or government entourage from one country arriving in the other. In early January, Shimon Peres visited India, and an elite Israeli anti-terrorist unit hosted an Indian security team. The Indian communications minister has just come to Jerusalem, and the Israeli defense minister is heading for New Delhi. Prime Minister Sharon and Indian President Kocheril Raman Narayanan are planning trips. Nonmilitary bilateral trade has grown at least fivefold in the last decade, to more than one billion dollars. Israel has also become India's second-largest arms supplier after Russia, and India may now be Israel's largest arms purchaser. India wants to upgrade its Soviet-era planes and tanks; and Israel has a reservoir of Soviet-trained engineers and experience in adapting captured Soviet equipment to its needs. Several billion dollars worth of arms deals have either been signed or are imminent—including a joint venture to upgrade hundreds of Soviet-era Indian planes as well as Indian purchases of Israeli sea-to-sea missiles and border-monitoring systems. And after weeks of uncertainty, Washington has given Israel the go-ahead for a billion-dollar sale of Phalcon spy planes to India (but has apparently asked Israel to wait until the current Pakistan-India crisis eases). The friendship has grown so overt that in recent months an anguished debate has broken out in the Palestinian press over who lost India.

Beyond the shared interests and fears, what energizes the new relationship is romance. As in the United States in the 1960s, a generation of young Israelis has fallen in love with India. Several times a year, tens of thousands of young Israelis gather in nature reserves for Indian-style festivals, with canvas-covered chai shops and stalls selling Indian clothes and music. Over the last decade, perhaps a quarter-million Israelis, most of them just out of the army, have visited India. When India's ambassador to Israel, Raminder S. Jassal, walks the streets in his Sikh turban, young Israelis often press their palms in the traditional greeting of Namaste; sometimes he is addressed by Israelis in Punjabi. "I haven't experienced this kind of love for India elsewhere," he says.

Even religious Jews and Hindus are discovering surprising

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parallels. Hinduism and Judaism are the "root faiths" from which most of the world's major religions have grown. Both are ritualistic, with complex mystical systems; both are confined to a specific people. "India is one of the few countries where my hosts immediately grasp my kosher needs," says Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University. "I can ask them whether dairy food has been cooked in a pot used for meat, and they don't look at me like I've fallen from the moon."

In fact, the two nations don't only face common external challenges; they face common internal ones as well. They are both ancient civilizations uneasily reborn as secular democracies, struggling with religion's place in their national identities. "I don't know of any other countries besides India and Israel where [religious] myth is so alive, but also where the struggle is so intense to keep myth from turning into political fundamentalism," comments Melila Hellner-Eshed, who teaches Jewish mysticism at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. In India, she says, "secular Israelis can relax and open themselves up to spirituality in a way that the politics of religion doesn't allow them to do at home."

Their absence of a biblical culture also allows Indians to develop a pristine relationship with Jews, free of the positive or negative memories that inevitably affect the relationship among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. "Indians very much admire Israel as a brave little country that has managed to be successful despite tremendous problems," says journalist Eric Silver, who heads the Israel-India Cultural Association. "I met one hotel keeper who prided himself on owning every book ever published about Moshe Dayan. Sometimes, though, it's embarrassing: Hindus would tell me with appreciation, 'You Israelis know how to handle the Muslims.'"

INDEED, CRITICS MIGHT conclude that the Israeli-Indian alliance is based on little more than hostility to Islam. But last week, when I met a dozen editors from Indian newspapers who were visiting Israel on a foreign ministry-sponsored trip, the Indian journalists vehemently rejected that notion. "India's Muslims aren't a 'religious minority,'" explained one editor, "but as Indian as anyone else." India's affinity for Israel, they insisted, was based on a deep sense that to truly fight terrorism you must experience it as a daily reality. "There's a lot of talk in Delhi about the possibility of an Israeli-Indian anti-terrorism alliance, independent of the Americans," said Shobori Ganguli of *The Pioneer*. Joyeeta Basu of *The Asian Age* concurred: "America suffered a one-time attack. Until September 11 they didn't understand anything about terrorism; even now I'm not sure how much they really understand. America doesn't face the threat of attacks across its borders. That is something India and Israel share. The American war on terrorism won't solve India's or Israel's problems. We may have to do that together."

The day after our meeting, a terrorist shot up a downtown street in Jerusalem, killing two people and wounding 14. That same day in Calcutta, terrorists shot up an American cultural center, killing four policemen and wounding 20 people. Israel and India never felt closer. ■

How to roll back the tax cut.

The Old Way

By NOAM SCHEIBER

TRIED ARGUING AGAINST tax cuts lately? Tom Daschle has. And the results weren't pretty. The day after Daschle's January 4 speech explaining how as yet unenacted tax cuts might *worsen* a recession, he was promptly ridiculed for suggesting that "tax relief" had *caused* America's economic woes and for advocating a tax increase. As the president so eloquently put it, "There's going to be people who say we can't have the tax cut go through anymore. That's a tax raise."

Daschle, of course, is right. The problem is that his argument is complicated: Large future tax cuts mean large future deficits, which mean higher interest rates in the future and higher long-term interest rates today. (Despite eleven short-term interest-rate reductions since last January, the ten-year Treasury rate is virtually unchanged.) And complicated arguments are easy to caricature. So, after three weeks of being pilloried as wanton "tax-raisers," the Democrats have caved. House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt raised the white flag at the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) last week, conceding that "we shouldn't be reconsidering tax cuts in the middle of a recession."

But backpedaling isn't the only response to an opponent who successfully caricatures your argument. The other is to caricature the argument yourself. And as it happens, the Democrats have a very obvious, very promising caricature available for just such an occasion. It's a little program called Medicare.

Last week a highly respected federal commission concluded that many seniors risk losing their health care unless the government raises Medicare reimbursements to doctors, hospitals, and nursing homes by some $15 billion per year. Since 1997, when Congress created it, the commission's recommendations have been more or less adhered to. But this year there's practically no chance of that happening. As Representative Jim McCrery, the Republican Medicare expert on the House Ways and Means Committee, told *The New York Times* last week, "[I]t's going to be difficult, in the current budgetary environment, to come up with increases in reimbursement." Indeed, rather than increasing Medicare funding, the Bush administration will almost certainly propose dipping into Medicare's $400 billion trust-fund surplus to pay for other parts of its budget. All told, Democrats could argue that Bush's budget shortchanges Medicare by as much as $550 billion over ten years. Meanwhile, the Bush tax cut, according to a recent Congressional Budget Office report, totals $1.6 trillion over the next ten years (assuming, as just about everyone on Capitol Hill does, that the tax cuts won't be allowed to expire after year nine, as currently slated).

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When you further consider that the top 1 percent of Americans will receive 38 percent of the tax benefits, the case seems clear: Republicans are cutting taxes for the rich on the backs of the elderly.

As a purely tactical matter, the benefits of "demagoguing" Medicare are plain. When Newt Gingrich proposed a $270 billion tax cut just as Republicans were "slowing the growth of Medicare" by roughly the same amount in 1996, Bill Clinton connected the dots—not only killing the tax cut, but reviving his presidency along the way. And Medicare is just as politically potent now as it was then: In a recent NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll ranking the issues Americans care about most, "health care and Medicare" came in third, behind only the recession and terrorism.

CRITICS WILL OBJECT that the practical effect of linking Medicare and Bush's tax cut will be to put off dealing with the root causes of America's looming Medicare crisis. Or worse, that by sowing Republican ill will, Democrats will make it harder for the parties to come together once difficult choices are no longer avoidable. In fact, entitlement nags have been making this argument for years. When Clinton began banging the drum on Medicare in 1996, Concord Coalition President Pete Peterson complained that "[T]he minute you get in a demagoguing cycle like this, it's a vicious circle. Both sides know that we have to do something about entitlements . . . but you can't do it if you demagogue it."

But Peterson's argument falls flat on several counts. For starters, it doesn't jibe with the historical record. During the 1982 campaign, Democrats "demagogued" Social Security like never before. In October of that year, the party ran a commercial that featured a pair of scissors slicing up a Social Security card while an announcer accused Republicans of "try[ing] to cut the cost-of-living increases by sixty billion dollars over ten years" and threatening to "increase Social Security taxes." (The commercial concluded, "It isn't fair. It's Republican.") A Democratic National Committee spokesman advised candidates to "shelve the lesser issues and go heavy on Social Security" during the final weekend of the campaign, and *The New York Times* observed that Democratic candidates everywhere were honing in on the message that "a vote for the Republicans is a vote against Social Security." And yet by January of 1983 a bipartisan commission had agreed to key changes in the pension program—among them, the same cost-of-living and payroll-tax adjustments the Democrats had supposedly rendered radioactive. President Reagan signed the plan into law three months later.

More importantly, though, the Concord crowd ignores the reason it's so important to repeal the tax cut in the first place: If the Treasury has been drained of trillions just as the baby-boomers begin to retire, saving Social Security and Medicare will be much, much harder—even with all the bipartisan goodwill in the world. Deficit hawks want the tax cut repealed, but they're like the leftists who wanted the Taliban overthrown but opposed the American military's effort to do so; they're so concerned with their moral purity that they won't give Democrats the tools to do the job.

To be sure, it *is* dishonest to pretend the tax cut debate is about Medicare per se and not part of a larger debate about the size of government. Unfortunately, Republicans have made it impossible to have this debate honestly. Rather than identify which programs they would cut, the Republican strategy ever since Reagan has been to force deficits through huge tax cuts—which they justify with various quack predictions (supply-side economics in the 1980s, wildly optimistic surplus projections last year)—and then leave it to future administrations to make whatever cuts will balance the budget. As long as that's the strategy, Democrats are perfectly justified in cutting intellectual corners as well. Call it fiscal self-defense.

Tom Daschle seems to understand. On "Face the Nation" last Sunday, Daschle began setting the stage for take two of the Democratic budget strategy: "We're gonna be using one trillion dollars of Social Security and Medicare trust funds over the course of the next ten years for purposes other than retirement," the majority leader noted. "I think we've got to be very concerned about that." Most Americans probably couldn't agree more. ■

On the Hill

Return Trip

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

FOR DICK GEPHARDT, 2001 was a year to forget. It began with bitter recriminations over his party's failure to win back the House of Representatives in the 2000 elections. Next, Gephardt watched helplessly as Tom DeLay rammed the Bush agenda through the House. In May, Gephardt saw his Senate counterpart Tom Daschle elevated from minority to majority leader by Jim Jeffords's party switch. Suddenly, Daschle was the undisputed face of the Democratic Party. As Republicans waged their "demonize Daschle" campaign late last year, Gephardt must have felt a strange envy: Republicans didn't even consider him worth attacking. Gephardt kept trying to get in the game, but nobody paid attention. "When he travels people say, 'You're not doing enough to stake out a position against Bush,'" says one adviser. "Even though we're doing it every day."

Gephardt seems determined to make this year different. Last week he delivered a Major Policy Address, the sort designed to attract the attention of party chieftains and pooh-bah pundits. He is pushing for an "economic growth summit" at the White House, reinjecting himself into an economic-stimulus debate that last year came down to Bush versus Daschle. He also gave the Democratic response to George W. Bush's State of the Union speech, a platform he sought for himself despite some Democrats' assumption that he and Daschle would appear jointly, as they did last year. And his aides are eagerly dishing to reporters about his "new vision" for the party and his likely run for president in 2004.

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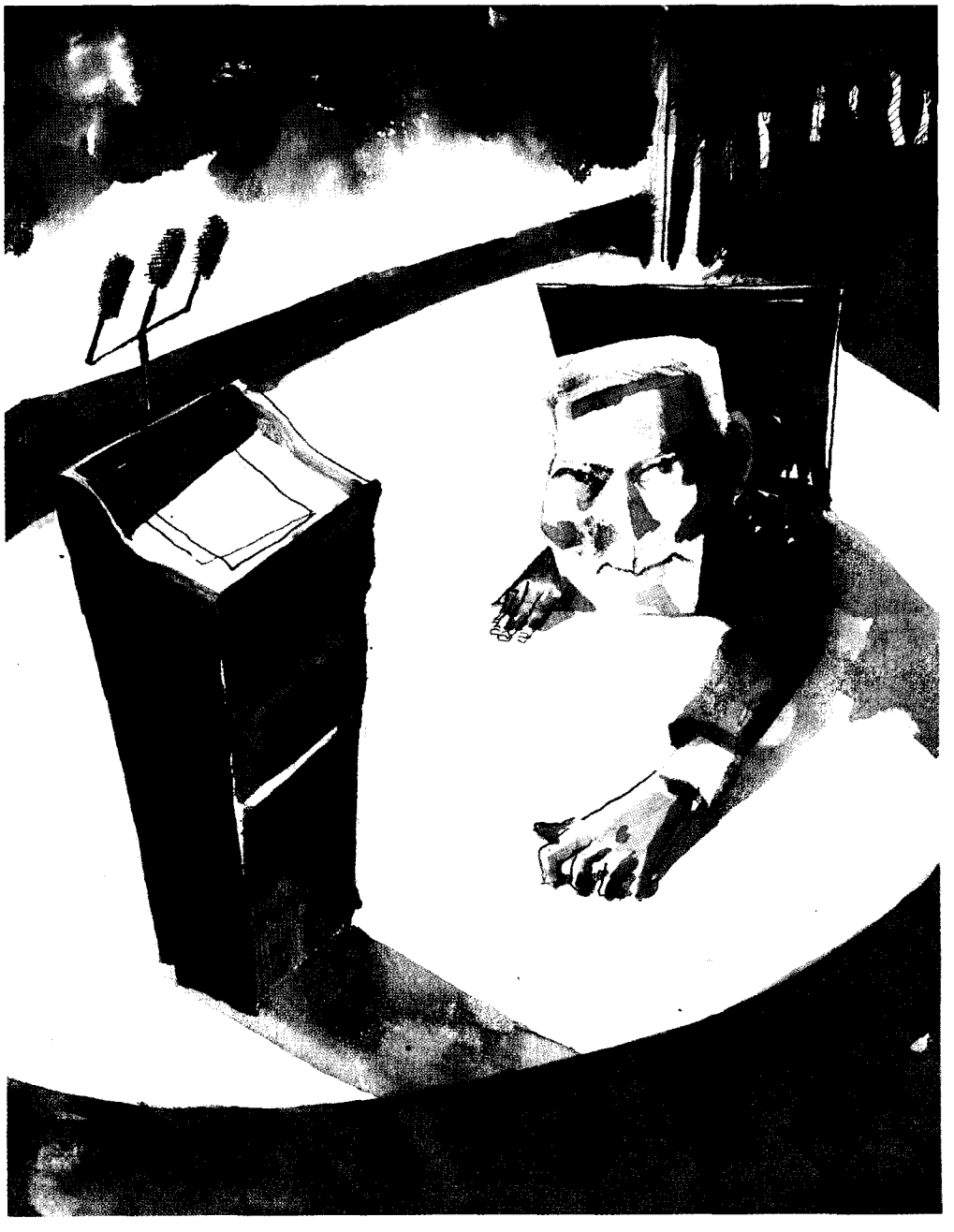
And so Gephardt will not go quietly into that good night. But his return to national prominence complicates life for Democrats, who already find themselves divided on fundamental questions such as whether or not to attack the Bush tax cut. Particularly surprising is the stance Gephardt is taking on those fundamental questions—a cautious centrism of the type he denounced just a few years ago. It's hard to see this new persona helping a Gephardt candidacy in 2004. But more significantly, it sets the stage for friction with Daschle and a divided front against the GOP.

GEPHARDT'S AIDES OFFER the obligatory caveat that he has not made up his mind, but there is little doubt that he is running for president. Some observers suggest that, should Democrats again fail to win back the House this fall, Gephardt will look like the Little Engine That Couldn't—and will choose not to run. Still others suggest that if Democrats *do* reclaim the House and Gephardt becomes speaker at last, he'll feel compelled to stay, if only to reward Democratic members who deferred their retirements or otherwise sacrificed to help him. But people close to Gephardt dismiss both theories. "There's no impact either way," says one top aide. Adds another adviser: "Being a Democratic speaker with a three-vote majority would not be a lot of fun. Can you imagine waking up in the middle of the night wondering where [conservative Blue Dog] Ralph Hall is? Or if Jim Traficant's going to bolt? It would be a nightmare." As the first aide bluntly puts it: "[H]e's strongly inclined to run."

As a presidential candidate, Gephardt has plenty of natural advantages—support from labor unions, access to big donors, an organization in Iowa and New Hampshire left over from his 1988 run. But he may be hampered by his image as a Capitol Hill tactician with no broader vision. "He is seen as the most stale, tired member of the [2004] group," an adviser to another potential candidate says. "He desperately needs to position himself as someone with something to say."

As an informal kickoff for a presidential campaign, Gephardt's address last week was clearly intended to do just that. "It's so easy to get bogged down in the day-to-day details of the current debate that we never lift our eyes and look ahead to the next decade," Gephardt told a crowd at the famously moderate Democratic Leadership Council (DLC). He might as well have hung a neon sign behind the podium flashing the words "BIG IDEAS." And his biggest idea was Clintonian centrism. Which is curious, given that as recently as 1997, Gephardt denounced the Clinton White House's cautious microgoverning. Back then Gephardt complained about "some who now call themselves New Democrats, but who set their compass only off the direction of others, who talk about the political center, but fail to understand that if it's only defined by others, it lacks core values." In the years since, he has crept back toward the center, after realizing that the balance of power in Congress depends on moderate, largely rural voters (see "Change for a Buck," August 21,



FRED SEBASTIAN

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2000, by Jonathan Cohn). And so his DLC speech was filled with buzzwords from the Clinton era—"opportunity, responsibility, community"—and avoided populist rhetoric. Those may be the fingerprints of two former Clintonites, Tom Freedman and Paul Orzulak, enlisted to help core Gephardt loyalists craft the speech. (Also included in a wide circle of consultants was John Weaver, a strategist for John McCain who sometimes advises Gephardt's office on reform issues.)

But there were two problems with Gephardt's "big ideas" speech. First, as Gephardt himself suggested in 1997, Clintonian centrism, practically by definition, means small, nonthreatening ideas. At the DLC, Gephardt admirably called for a new "Apollo Project" to achieve energy independence, but his specific proposals mainly consisted of new tax credits; he avoided a politically treacherous challenge to the auto industry on immediate fuel-efficiency increases. He called for a universal pension system—a worthwhile idea, but one that seemed ginned up to exploit the Enron scandal. There was a familiar appeal for worker training and a call for faster technological innovation. But, determined to project a centrist image, Gephardt largely ducked the most important domestic issue facing his party: the Bush tax cut. Gephardt sees the tax cut as an unwinnable fight that will hurt Democrats in November—effectively placing him to the right of not only Daschle, but of the DLC itself, which has called for repealing large chunks of the tax cut. Gephardt even seemed to imply that Democrats like Daschle and Ted Kennedy who have contested the tax cut are risking economic damage. "It's my view that we shouldn't be reconsidering tax cuts in the middle of a recession," he said. Gephardt's performance at the State of the Union was more of the same. CNN caught him conspicuously rising to applaud when Bush called the tax cut's size "just right." And his response speech was quick to praise tax cuts and cuts in "wasteful spending," before gently sounding more traditional Democratic notes.

MOREOVER, THESE CLEAR attempts to impress swing voters in key House districts this fall may play to Gephardt's weaknesses, not his strengths. "In terms of 2002," says a senior aide, "[w]e're not gonna win in big cities. We're going to be fighting this out in rural and less progressive districts." Yet it is doubtful that many swing voters in the heartland are even aware of Gephardt's latest speeches. In fact, many of Gephardt's colleagues in the House had been expecting him to stake out a liberal niche, in contrast with potential centrist candidates like Joe Lieberman and John Edwards. "There's a lack of understanding about why Gephardt would appear to be moving right," says an aide to one senior House liberal.

Indeed, it was hard not to notice the contrast between the DLC speech and Gephardt's appearance at a Democratic National Committee meeting the weekend before, where he delivered a furious, finger-wagging partisan tirade. This was a Shrum-style speech, with talk of Enron, campaign finance reform, prescription drugs, and "handouts to the wealthiest and to the corporations." And unlike his bland DLC performance, Gephardt clearly relished this populist stem-winder. "He is at his best when he's talking about what he truly feels," says the House aide. "You can tell when he's passionate. He's not passionate about tax credits. He's passionate about trade and economics."

AND IF GEPHARDT'S strategy may hurt his presidential run, it could hurt the party as well. Specifically, in his effort to reposition himself, Gephardt has opened more space between himself and Daschle. And the larger the 2004 race looms, the greater the likelihood of friction between the two leaders. After Daschle's speech blaming the Bush tax cut for the lost surplus in early January, for instance, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Gephardt advisers "say Daschle erred in overemphasizing deficits and the Bush tax cuts' impact," touching off a minor diplomatic crisis on the Hill. ("Stunning," was the reaction of one Daschle ally that day.) The mortified reaction of Gephardt staffers suggests that the critique wasn't meant for print, but it fueled suspicions that Gephardt's camp is quietly sniping at Daschle's strategy to Washington reporters. A few days later came word that a planned visit by Daschle to last weekend's House Democratic retreat had been canceled at the last minute. Staffers firmly insist it was a scheduling snafu, but the story remains murky, and columnist Robert Novak reported that Gephardt had rescinded the invitation.

Aides to both men strongly refute this sort of talk, which they blame on troublemakers with their own agendas. "There are people outside their relationship, other people in the party with presidential aspirations, who would like to sew the idea of Daschle-Gephardt discord," says Bill Carrick, a longtime Gephardt adviser. There's no doubt that Daschle and Gephardt have long enjoyed a real friendship. Daschle was the first senator to endorse Gephardt for president in 1988. They meet in the Capitol at least once a week to plot strategy, and in November they traveled together to Mexico for an official visit.

But with every passing month, the two men find themselves closer to a Democratic primary in which they may compete. The problem could be defused if, as some people close to Daschle now suspect, Daschle doesn't run. (Among other things, his wife is said to be opposed.) But as long as it's an open question, the two men will never recapture the harmony of old.

Mistrust between leaders can be dangerous for a party. When Bob Dole was preparing to run for president in 1996, he made no secret of his concerns about Newt Gingrich's brusque leadership of the House, providing fodder for Democrats trying to paint Gingrich as an extremist. Since then there has been less dueling among party leaders in Congress, partly because Republicans like Trent Lott and Dennis Hastert clearly aren't presidential material. The key for Daschle and Gephardt will be to work together at least until this year's midterm elections. Even optimists in the party doubt they can easily co-exist after that if both decide to run for president. "You'll start seeing tensions after 2002," says a former presidential strategist not aligned with either man. "You'll start seeing elbows thrown." Here's hoping they can wait that long. ■

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White House Watch

Divide & Conquer

By Ryan Lizza

As they pondered the right kind of State of the Union speech for a country at war, the president's brainy scribes turned to one that had been delivered when the country was at peace. "There was a meeting," a White House official explains, "and the chief of staff [Andy Card] said, 'We want a different type of State of the Union. We don't want a laundry list.' Of course that never happens." This year it happened. In contrast with his budget address a year ago, George W. Bush delivered a coherent speech with big ideas rather than a Clintonian laundry list. The model was Franklin D. Roosevelt—not FDR's 1942 address to Congress one month after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but his 1941 "Four Freedoms" speech a year earlier.

FDR's speech was largely a warning about complacency. Roosevelt cautioned against "loose talk of our immunity." He said there were "secret agents" in the United States plotting an attack. "The need of the moment," he declared, "is that our actions and our policy should be devoted primarily—almost exclusively—to meeting this foreign peril." Like Bush, he asked that this be done "without regard to partisanship." Where FDR cast the United States as a beacon for a world to be built upon four freedoms—of speech, of religion, from want, and from fear—Bush declared seven "non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance."

But the most notable parallel is that FDR delivered the "Four Freedoms" address when the country was in danger but not yet at war. He was preparing inward-looking Americans for a conflict with the outside world. And this is what makes the 1941 speech such a telling model for Bush's wartime address Tuesday night. It marks a recognition by the White House that, prior to the speech, terrorism was no longer most Americans' top concern. Enron had replaced Afghanistan. Two-thirds of the public said they wanted Bush to talk more about the economy and domestic issues than terrorism. Less than five months after 9/11, Bush had to remind Americans that the war has only just begun.

This is the fundamental tension that will persist for the rest of this election year: Democrats will try to capitalize on voters' inevitable return to domestic concerns—especially Enron and the economy—while Bush will try to yank them back to the war. The extent to which both sides are leveraging these issues can't be overstated. For Democrats, Enron is a way to talk about almost every issue they care about: campaign finance reform, Social Security, the economy, and the federal budget. It is also a means to attack Bush's agenda and exploit his greatest vulnerability, the perception that he is too tied to corporate America. For Bush, leveraging the war on terrorism knows no bounds. He has repackaged his entire domestic agenda in the garb of "security," a process that began well before his State of the Union. On Bush's nominees languishing in the Senate, Ari Fleischer recently said, "The president deserves to have his team in place, particularly during a time of war." On the day Dick Cheney announced he would not cooperate with the General Accounting Office, he said, "Can you imagine an FDR or Teddy Roosevelt, in the midst of a grave national crisis, dealing with the problems we're having to deal with now, over here on the side as a matter of political expediency, trading away a very important fundamental principle of the presidency?" Last year Bush's aides usually referred to "faith-based" legislation; now it is always called the "armies of compassion" bill.

But within this umbrella of "security" that now covers all Bush initiatives, there is a grander strategy that the White House hopes will help pass the president's agenda, elect a Republican House and Senate, and build a majority coalition for Bush's reelection. Call it divide and conquer.

Tuesday night Bush asked Congress to approach his domestic policies in "the same spirit of cooperation we've applied to our war against terrorism." But the hallmark of Bush's 2002 strategy is not unity; it is division. His congressional agenda this year is built around a set of issues that split Democrats in ways that reprise intraparty battles of the 1980s. It started this month with taxes. With the return of federal budget deficits, Democrats tried to attack the Bush tax cut, but quickly split into three camps. Ted Kennedy explicitly wants to repeal some of the cuts. Tom Daschle blasts aspects of the tax cut for causing red ink and worsening the recession, but is cagey about delaying or repealing them. And Dick Gephardt, the last prominent Democrat to speak on the issue, was so afraid that Bush would accuse him of raising taxes that he has all but endorsed the same disingenuous argument as Bush—that a call for delaying tax cuts ten years from now amounts to a tax increase today.

Bush hopes to create this same dynamic on almost every major issue he mentioned in his speech. Take defense spending. The Democrats' now familiar strategy has been to embrace Bush on all matters related to the war. Early administration leaks suggested Bush's defense-spending increase would be around $30 billion, but the number he announced was larger than anyone expected: a $48 billion hike, the largest jump in 20 years. Democrats responded with silence or uncertainty. "Well, there clearly isn't room," said Tom

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Daschle. "But I think it's probably premature to come to any conclusion about whether this number is appropriate or whether another number would be better." A Pentagon request that large will create major fissures among Democrats, and Bush is baiting them into attacking it during war. Bush's huge homeland security budget will do the same. And even as the president increases the deficit and offers no obvious plan for deep cuts elsewhere, he is laying the groundwork to blame the Democrats as profligate spenders. The deficit won't last long, Bush said, glancing at the Democratic side of the chamber, "so long as Congress restrains spending and acts in a fiscally responsible manner."

Bush is also trying to force the Democrats to show their dovish underbellies on the war on terrorism itself. In his speech, the president articulated a sweeping new view of the war that goes far beyond Al Qaeda, saving his most belligerent language for Iraq and hinting at action against Saddam Hussein. "I will not wait on events, while dangers gather," he noted cryptically. "The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons." But if there are any prominent Democrats besides Joe Lieberman itching to extend the war to Iraq, they have been remarkably silent. The two-party consensus on the war will crumble if the United States attacks Iraq, and dissenting Democrats will be left explaining—perhaps in an election year—why they don't stand with Bush against Saddam. One White House official marvels at how poorly the Democrats have done at building up any national security credentials in the wake of the attacks. "It's not possible for the politics of a superpower to be dominated only by domestic issues," he says.

Bush has also made welfare reform a top agenda item for 2002, an issue that has split Democrats and united Republicans for decades. Clinton took the welfare club away from his opponents in 1996, but the GOP is eager to return it to their arsenal. So far Bush has staked out a centrist position, calling for the restoration of food stamps for legal immigrants and fighting off attempts by conservatives to require states to coerce single welfare mothers into marriage. There is less division among Democrats on welfare reform than there was in the '80s and '90s, but the issue is still more likely to play in Bush's favor. After all, last time around the popular legislation was opposed by almost exactly half the Democratic caucus—21 senators and 98 representatives—including Daschle and Gephardt. And if Democratic leaders try to stake out as tough a line as Bush, they could provoke a nasty squabble with the Congressional Black Caucus.

Two other pillars of Bush's domestic agenda that he laid out Tuesday are the restoration of fast-track trade negotiating authority and energy legislation. There are cleavages within both parties on trade, but fast track opens deeper divisions on the Democratic side, as the House vote showed last year. In the Senate, Daschle and many Democrats favor the legislation, but pushing a trade bill vehemently opposed by unions during a recession is hardly a good way to rally the labor base of the Democratic Party in an election year. The energy bill may be more complicated. It will be Enronized by Democrats, and Joe Lieberman and other senators have already said they want to know who met with Cheney's energy task force before they consider the legislation it produced. But again, Democrats are divided. Not only do some oil-state Democrats support the Bush plan, but the White House has found the Teamsters a potent ally in its fight to open ANWR to oil drilling, a major component of the energy legislation.

And Bush's alliance with the Teamsters is not an aberration. With the electorate so closely split, picking off even small numbers of union members could help the administration divide and conquer Democrats this year. Bush won the solidly Democratic state of West Virginia in 2000 by catering to the state's coal miners. There is now a budding alliance between the White House and the US Steelworkers, who have been pleasantly surprised by how much attention the administration has paid to their pleas for protectionist measures. In early March, Bush will determine the future of this alliance when he decides whether to implement quotas or tariffs on steel imports. Look for the administration to swallow some of its free-market fundamentalism.

This union strategy, present before 9/11, has now dovetailed with a larger opportunity for Bush to translate his post-attack popularity into a small but sustained advantage for the GOP. No president has ever remained as popular as Bush for as long. The president now has 10 of the 14 highest job-approval ratings ever recorded by Gallup. Previously, the longest a president had ever stayed within five points of his highest approval rating was seven weeks, when LBJ stayed close to his high of 79 percent. *Bush has stayed within five points of 90 percent for 16 weeks.* "These are stratospheric numbers that have no historical parallel," says GOP pollster Whit Ayres. Obviously, Bush will return to Earth. But he has sustained these numbers long enough to raise questions about whether some people drawn to him personally after 9/11 may be persuaded to stick with the GOP. Republicans say that less educated, lower-income women and blue-collar men are shifting over—the same kinds of Democrats who switched to the GOP under Ronald Reagan. This could be the year that "Bush Democrats" emerge. The president played to this new audience Tuesday night, too. Teamsters President James Hoffa—Bush calls him "Jimmy"—sat behind Laura Bush in the first lady's box. With his eye on the gender gap that he seems to have closed, Bush emphasized the liberation of Afghan women and called attention to four different females sitting with the first lady, including the new Afghan minister of women's affairs.

A defense buildup. Deficit-spending. The dominance of national security. Welfare. The return of hard-hat Republicans. The year 2002 is starting to look like an enormous problem for the Democrats. Still, they have time to turn the agenda to their own set of wedge issues: Enron, Social Security, health care, and the environment. And they might even try responding to Bush's big deficits and big spending by reminding the White House of a passage from FDR's 1941 speech that Bush ignored: "I have called for personal sacrifice, and I am assured of the willingness of almost all Americans to respond to that call. A part of the sacrifice means the payment of more money in taxes. In my budget message I will recommend that a greater portion of this great defense program be paid for from taxation than we are paying for today." Or maybe not. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Toward the Shadows

THE PEOPLE WHO made the film about Iris Murdoch began with several handicaps. Obviously no film could deal adequately with her ideas in philosophy, a subject that she taught and wrote about through most of her life; nor could it convey the texture of her novels. These limits would apply to any film about an intellectual and artist; but the handicap increases in **Iris** (Miramax) for the very reason that Murdoch was chosen as the subject. The mature Murdoch sickens with Alzheimer's, declines, and dies. This is not drama, it is certainly not tragedy; it is calamity.

To judge by the result, which is gripping, the film-makers foresaw all the difficulties. They knew that they could only sketch the mind and art of the woman, but they had to do it sufficiently to support her position in the world; and they had to devise a means to make the slow detrition more than a sickbed watch. The screenplay is intelligent in both regards. Derived from the two books that John Bayley published about his wife—one while she was dying, the other after her death—this screenplay was written by two extraordinary men, unusually connected. One of them was Richard Eyre, who also directed the film and who is co-author of *Changing Stages*, a history of British and American theater in the last century. This book, in its course, discusses the plays of Charles Wood and says of him, "There is no contemporary writer who has received so little of his deserved public acclaim." Eyre's collaborator on this screenplay was Charles Wood. (Wood's screenplay experience reaches back to *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, *The Knack*, and that neglected gem *How I Won the War*.)

What Eyre and Wood have done to make the film dramatic is simple and thematically central. They have continuously juxtaposed Iris's early adult life in the 1950s—her meeting with John Bayley, their love and their marriage—with the old marrieds of the 1990s. From the very start there are two Irises and Johns: the film's first shot shows the young pair swimming nude in the Thames near Oxford, and in the next shot they are swimming "today" in swimsuits.

It would verge on the coarse to say that the present-day story is interwoven with flashbacks, just as it would be equally coarse to say that the early story is interwoven with flash-forwards. Eyre and Wood have situated their film in two time strata, and though this device is hardly novel in itself, it is used here for a unique purpose, the quintessence that underlies the film. This binary form lifts the film past the account of John and Iris, past any exploitation of her illness, to large inclusiveness. As we watch, we sense that, moving as their story is, it is not only their story. It is concerned with the awesomeness of life for everyone, the promises of the young posed against the whims of fate, the iron disregard with which time and chance sweep all of us along. Alzheimer's disease is not terrible here because it happens to an admired novelist and because it racks the admired literary critic who is her husband. It would be obscene to think that Murdoch's case was especially harsh because it happened to a brilliant person. Certainly no film would have been made of her if she had not been famous, but the film that her fame instigated eventually tells us that her fame is irrelevant. All of us, we can see, are borne by a current in which Alzheimer's is only one possible swirl, and the fame of the victim, if it exists, is only a toy of pathos.

Eyre, as director, seems always to have this idea in mind, as he knits the energies of the young pair with the cozier energies of their long married life. One moment in particular crystallizes this overall view. After the older Iris begins to deteriorate mentally, she goes for an encephalogram. When the X-ray is shown on the screen and a doctor's voice fixes the certainties, the film suddenly cuts back—to the young Iris arching through the water, nude, lovely, moving unknowingly but inevitably toward that encephalogram.

But it would serve *Iris* ill to hang it only with crepe: let there also be garlands. The film is self-evidently grave, but it is not lachrymose. Almost every moment in both time strands is thoroughly realized, as if that moment of life and living were being saved, not filmed. Eyre, who ran the Royal National Theatre for ten years, is an expert and graceful director. His non-theater directing has mostly been in television, though he has made a few films, and he knows how to work up close without crowding. And he relishes humor. The young Iris turns up for lunch one day at a man's house with John in tow. Obviously the man had expected a lunch with her alone, followed by a long afternoon *en lit*, but must now force himself to welcome the other guest. The host's irritation is conveyed without a word but with our accompanying chuckles.

We can guess that Eyre had a dream cast in mind when he first contemplated this film, and for some ridiculously lucky reason the dream came true. The older Iris is played by Judi Dench. If anything needs to be added to that sentence, it is only that, as the clouds begin to darken Iris's mind, Dench suggests that, inside her being, the original marvelous Iris knows she is being imprisoned. This may or may not be a clinical possibility, but it is a Dench achievement. The younger Iris is Kate Winslet, whose career has been mixed but who has clearly showed, even in such misfires as *Hideous Kinky* and *Holy Smoke*, that she has deep resources and a power of truth. Here we can see that she is the first English actress since Emma Thompson to approach the latter's transformation of verve and daring and intellect into attributes of sex. (Remember Thompson in *Carrington*.)

Jim Broadbent, long an endearing actor (one instance: W.S. Gilbert in *Topsy-Turvy*), plays the older John with a touching stammer and donnish tenderness. The screenplay wisely gives him one dissonant scene: lying in bed next to his sleeping, mentally remote wife, he remembers her sexual wanderings when young, and he bursts out in tearful anger at her. After this, he is again tender, even more credibly so. Hugh Bonneville, as the young John, has his aims fixed for him by Broadbent. He must be as much like the man who is to come as he can be: and he succeeds, with the loving bewilderment, the intellectual linkage, the appreciative awe of the older John.

In some of Iris's younger scenes and in her still-lucid ones later on, she speaks, at lunches and in lectures, of the mind as the source of freedom and of words as the vessels of thought. Samples of her ideas were necessary, but occasionally these lines, which I take to be quotations from Murdoch, are a bit heavily planted as contrasts to what will happen to her. Also, Murdoch's stature as a novelist is somewhat exaggerated. Well, Dr. Johnson said that

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"in lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath"; and I suppose that, in a comparable situation, neither are screenwriters. More important are the moments that vibrate in memory. One of them is the early scene in which the young pair are bicycling in the country. She races ahead, and John speaks—the first line of the film. "Wait for me, wait for me, Iris," he calls. It could almost be the picture's motto. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Good Hope of the Cape

DURING THE DARK and brutal days of apartheid, the theatrical conscience of South Africa was the anguished protest writer Athol Fugard. With the decline of the Nationalist Government and the coming to power of the African National Congress (ANC), the cultural spotlight of the nation has focused on a short, balding political satirist and female impersonator named Pieter-Dirk Uys. The offspring of an Afrikaner father and a German-Jewish mother, this fearless picador has been goading the apartheid bull for more than thirty years. Uys began his professional life as a newspaper columnist in Johannesburg, and it was in those columns that he first invented the character of the racist Afrikaner dowager Evita Bezuidenhout, conceiving her as the widow of a Nationalist MP who herself became ambassador to a mythical land called Bapetikosweti. Evita was later to leap off the page and onto the stage when Uys, in drag, began to act out her character. Indeed, she soon emerged as the very embodiment of post-apartheid South Africa, an inveterate reactionary who opportunistically joined the ANC after the liberation. Her political afterlife consisted in doling out homilies and recipes, doting on her three black grandchildren, and dispensing latent racist sentiments with generous helpings of liberal hypocrisy.

I missed seeing Uys when he visited these shores. But on a recent trip to South Africa I had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to his compound in Darling, an isolated little village about forty-five minutes from Cape Town. To get there, you drive north along the R27, passing the desolate expanses of forlorn dunes that dot the western Cape, until you enter an unexpected cluster of habitation. It is even more unexpected to find a restaurant-theater in the area, called Evita Se Perron (an Afrikaans pun that conflates the name of the Argentine queen of the people with that of the local railroad station). There customers eat sandwiches and sip drinks while Evita, exuding feminine charm and political duplicity, entertains them with eighteen different programs in a combination of English, Afrikaans, and occasionally Yiddish.

With a memoir that Uys wrote under her name, *A Part Hate, A Part Love*, Evita has also become a literary figure. The epigraph to that book is Uys's oft-repeated mantra: "The future of South Africa is certain. It is the past that is unpredictable." What makes the past so difficult to predict are the failing memories of those who practiced apartheid. Aided by an impeccable ear for accented speech, Uys has re-created a number of these Afrikaners, most (unlike Evita) based on real people with similar memory failures. Their voices can be heard on an album that Uys recorded called "Truth," on which he parades a number of these miscreants before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "at last ready to tell the truth, so help me Mandela." But the truth has disappeared into a vast historical vacuum, and "the former racists, the former fascists, the former terrorists are now all members of Parliament."

Apartheid president P. W. Botha, for example, refusing to apologize to the Commission, remarks that "we don't have to practice apartheid, we have it down to a fine art.... We are right, we are white, and the world can go fly a kite." The coloreds, represented by Reformed theologian Alan Boesak, find comfort in the fact that they do not have to mix with blacks. (Actually, he had no choice after being imprisoned by the ANC in 1997 for fraud and theft.) As for the blacks, Uys's satire on them is milder but still pungent. Archbishop Desmond Tutu appears as a benevolent "Truth Fairy," giggling and burbling about how South Africans are the rainbow people (though the pot of gold at the end of that rainbow has been stolen). Other ANC party members continue to express great reverence for Winnie Mandela—"beloved mother of the nation and sister to the Virgin Mary"—even though she has a lot of skeletons in her closet, "some of them very small" (an allusion to the adolescent activist whom she was alleged to have had murdered). Perhaps Uys's most venomous satire is reserved for the former foreign minister Roelof F. Botha, also known as Pik. Conceding that Jesus, because of his non-European origins, would not have been allowed to live in South Africa, Pik adds magnanimously: "Let me say this—by saying that—that the government of South Africa is willing to make an exception as far as Jesus Christ is concerned—he'll be an honorary white."

Uys's characters are generic as well as specific. A white soldier recalls the days when he was asked to shoot stone-throwing kids who might have been the children of his own maid. And, in what is perhaps his most telling impersonation, a suburban "kugel" (the South African equivalent of a Jewish American Princess) pretends to oppose apartheid while secretly voting Nat in order to protect her investments. "I don't need amnesty," she drawls, "I already got alimony.... I said to my maid, Dora help me, Comrade Madame has got to go the Truth Commission."

But Comrade Madame, the victim of another kind of stereotyping, is hardly reluctant to defend herself against charges of Eurocentricity. To those who find her insufficiently African, she replies: "Well then, why don't you give back the Mercedes-Benz you stole last week? Give back your Armani suit, your Gucci shoes. OK, I'm Eurocentric. I'm going back to Europe, but I'm taking my electricity with me." Contrasted with those South African Jews who failed to oppose apartheid, on the other hand, are Jewish heroines such as Helen Suzman, who risked position, money, and reputation to further the struggle against racism. ("And where is Helen Suzman's portrait now?" P.W. Botha asks grimly. "Lying in the rubble heap along with my

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portrait. There is no memory.")

It is through the character of Evita that Uys is most successful in keeping the historical memory alive. "In spite of all you may have heard about my involvement in apartheid," she says, "my conscience is clear, because I never used it." Sashaying onto a stage decorated with kitschy prints of South African landscapes, Evita appears dressed as a black woman MP, in a long costume with flounce sleeves, large round earrings, sunglasses, and a huge headdress that would have seemed extravagant on Carmen Miranda. With flamboyant flourishes of her polished nails, she is ready to give us lessons on how to bake "cooksisters" (an Afrikaner cake) and how to prepare authentic South African cuisine ("I'll bring you the pot, you bring me the missionary"). Before long she is distracted by the diners, whom she begins to interrogate about their national origins. ("Are you on holiday from Sheffield? Do you still have your wallet?") Archbishop Tutu is in the house this afternoon with his wife and grandchild. Evita invites him up on stage to give him a cake and a kiss and to dance the toyi-toyi (an African dance) with him.

Evita is a member of that vast world of theatrical transvestites—Dame Edna, Quentin Crisp, and the like—who populate one-person shows these days. But whereas most transvestite fare satirizes social and sexual mores, Evita's material is almost exclusively political. In the show I saw, "Tannie Evita's Cooksisters," Evita seemed largely preoccupied with the crime pervading the country today: "Our South Africans are so polite—always opening the door. Sometimes taking the door with them." "Don't drive so fast. There are children playing in the streets—waiting to break into houses." She is just as concerned with grand larceny, which is to say government corruption, as with petty theft: "We are devaluing the rand, so when a South African politician steals 40,000 rand, what can he get for that in Switzerland? Nothing!"

On the subject of AIDS, she offers her nephew's opinion that the disease will allow Afrikaners to rule South Africa again—by annihilating the blacks. It is an opinion that is just barely satire, considering Thabo Mbeki's disturbing theories about the disease and the appalling decision of his government to fight a court ruling that pregnant women with AIDS should receive medication. As proof of her dedication to the continuation of the African races, Evita brings on stage her three black grandchildren. "My daughter married a black man," she explains cheerfully, then sobs, "I don't mind." Alternately blessed and shamed, she looks at them with grandmotherly pride as they sweetly warble a ditty a cappella. In this brief domestic moment, all the confusions, contradictions, dangers, and possibilities of post-apartheid South Africa come into clear focus. Evita's embrace of multiculturalism despite her lingering racism, the way she adapts to the new imperatives without sacrificing her old privileges—these are the conflicts that occupy this fascinating country in its painful struggle toward full nationhood for all.

Jan Kott, a seminal critical mind of the twentieth century and one of the last of its theater intellectuals, has died at the age of eighty-seven. I mourn him as a friend and a colleague. It is now almost half a century since this Polish expatriate first published *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, a book that exploded our thinking about how Shakespeare could be produced on stage. It was Kott's habit to urge contemporary parallels on the classics, not through specious updating so much as through lived experience—in his case, a life under the Nazi occupation and later under Communism.

Kott opened up new possibilities for hundreds of classical directors, first with his insights into Shakespeare and then with his subsequent work on the Greeks and the French classical dramatists. To him, every great playwright was our contemporary, and it was the obligation of the theater to make every play as startling and unpredictable as it was on the day it was written. Artaud's battle cry, "No more masterpieces," might very well have been Kott's. But whereas Artaud wanted to return the theater to a ritual of blood and cruelty, Kott continually tried to rejuvenate great drama through deeper imaginative probes, fresher intelligence, and more vital scholarship animated by genuine experience.

We have all been the beneficiaries of his incisive, profound, original thinking. To speak personally, Kott had an immense influence on our work at Yale during the year he spent in residence there in the mid-1960s. His heavily accented voice with its comically rising inflections was sometimes parodied, but it was the medium of extraordinary insight, both in the classroom and on the stage. His inspiration continued, not only at the Yale Repertory Theatre but later at the American Repertory Theatre and everywhere that classical theater was practiced. There are scores of European, American, and Irish directors—Peter Brook, Andrei Serban, Robert Woodruff, JoAnne Akalaitis, Marco Martinelli, Charles Marowitz, Declan Donnellan, Ariane Mnouchkine, Yuri Yeremin, Elizabeth LeCompte, Des McAnuff, Adrian Hall, Bob McGrath, François Rochaix, Marcus Stern (the list is too long to be completed here)—who owe a creative debt to Kott's unique work.

The twentieth century has often been called the century of the director. What is often overlooked is that it was also the century of the classical playwright, in that a host of neglected or overlooked plays of the past were brought to public attention by interpretive artists under Kott's influence. All those interested in a more penetrating, more serious, more daring theater art owe a debt to this unique man. ■

Exorcisms

By ENRIQUE KRAUZE

The Feast of the Goat by Mario Vargas Llosa translated by Edith Grossman

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 404 pp., $25)

"THERE ARE NO limits to deterioration: it can always be worse." This observation by Alejandro Mayta, the disenchanted guerrilla fighter of Mario Vargas Llosa's novel *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta*, who returns to his birthplace after many years, freed of ghosts but devoid of hope, came to mind in March, 1990. I was in Lima to participate in a conference on "The Culture of Freedom," a meeting of writers and intellectuals that marked the beginning of the final phase of Vargas Llosa's presidential campaign. I had last been in the city a little more than a decade earlier, when Lima still seemed grand and dignified; but this time I was struck by the

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army of child beggars on every street corner, and I learned the horrifying statistics of the populist legacy in Peru: reserves almost non-existent, the country virtually bankrupt, a decline of fifteen percent in the GDP, inflation in four figures. Blackouts, sabotage, kidnappings, and murders had become daily news. Above all, there was the terrifying, ubiquitous presence of the Shining Path, a guerrilla group so relentlessly nihilist that it made Dostoevsky's possessed seem like soap opera characters.

And yet the prevailing sentiment of the times was hope. The *annus mirabilis* of 1989 had just ended, presaging, as Vargas Llosa would say, "a humanity without wars, without blocs," united by "the common denominator of democracy and freedom." Seemingly more modest but no less significant were the recent changes in Latin America: the end of the civil war in El Salvador, the free elections in Nicaragua, the general discrediting of militarism, the flowering of democracy across almost the entire continent—except in Cuba, Haiti, and of course Mexico, which was governed by a regime that months later Vargas Llosa notoriously and lethally characterized as "the perfect dictatorship."

In an after-dinner discussion Vargas Llosa spoke animatedly about his plans for governing Peru: "Now, for the first time, all countries are free to choose wealth.... We have the example of the export economies of the East that three decades ago were poorer than Peru.... We must privatize the telephone companies, the airlines, the banks, the farming cooperatives, support the *informales* [small, unofficial businesses] in the city economy and the *parceleros* [poor peasants who rent land to survive] in the country.... We must organize civil society in units of self-defense.... We must clean out the huge garbage pit of populist rhetoric." Vargas Llosa proposed that the state scale back its unproductive and corrupt policies of economic intervention and that it concentrate instead on basic endeavors such as education, security, health, justice, and cultural development, all within a framework of tolerance for political liberties. He planned, in sum, to govern as a modernizer. It was a plastic hour in Peru's history, when anything seemed possible. And he was not alone in his enthusiasm for the "Great Change" that his posters on the streets and his television ads proclaimed. "He's our last hope," I heard people say. "He's our salvation."

There was, in fact, a faintly missionary tone to Vargas Llosa's actions and speeches. Having lost his religious faith in his early youth, he seems to have required a remnant of that faith to embark on a historical adventure that would put his life, and the lives of his family, at risk. He missed the writing life, the novels that he had to postpone, the peace of the libraries. But he was enjoying the adventure because it brought him closer to the example of Malraux, to the creative alliance of thought and action.

In Vargas Llosa's case, action followed a particular plan. Accustomed (as he has repeatedly written) to summoning his ghosts in order to exorcise them, to mold them to the shape of his fantasies, he now proposed to exorcise the demons of Peru not in the pages of his work but in the arenas of history. He hoped to banish the time-honored evils of power from the seat of power. It was an extraordinary ambition, this hope of deposing the past. When people seek to depose the past, other people usually get hurt. I left Lima pondering Max Weber's famous warning: "He who seeks the salvation of the soul, of his own and of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the quite different tasks of politics can only be solved by violence." I comforted myself with the thought that Vargas Llosa was himself one of the great skeptics about revolutionary ambition.

BEING A WRITER in Latin America has always meant accepting the burden of political consciousness. For Latin American intellectuals to ignore the pull of politics is to admit to a kind of frivolity or solipsism. Their predicament, and their responsibility, is rather like the predicament and the responsibility of Russian intellectuals in the nineteenth century, or dissident Poles and Czechs in the twentieth century. That is why the figure of Sartre and his belief in the "engagement" of the intellectual caught on in Latin America. In time, Sartre and his imitators in Europe and America exchanged that commitment for the sorry substitute of a rigid ideology, but the model left its mark.

When Vargas Llosa renounced his Marxist beliefs—it was a gradual process of disenchantment that culminated in the mid-1970s—he did not renounce his "engaged" stance. Instead he gave it a new foundation, basing it on a genuine liberalism that preferred the struggle for the individual's liberation to the struggle for the society's liberation. That is why he reconsidered and came to admire the work of Camus and its wise anti-utopianism, and discovered—late, but not too late—the classics of modern liberal thought. The apostate Marxist kindled particularly to the ideas of Isaiah Berlin and Karl Popper. Octavio Paz once remarked that in his liberalism Vargas Llosa had the passion of the convert. (It was a passion shared by Paz, who in his youth had also been a

IN THE MINORITY

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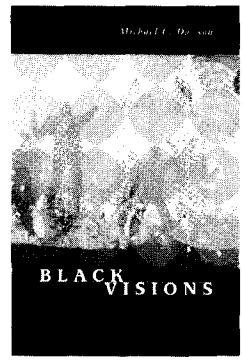

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fervent socialist and who completed his own ordeal of self-criticism in 1974, when he read Solzhenitsyn and Mandelstam.)

When I first met Vargas Llosa in 1979, politics seemed rather distant from his mind. The military regime in Lima was giving way to a civil government, but Peru had not yet recovered from the destructive effects that Vargas Llosa chronicled in his first novels (especially *The Time of the Hero* and *Conversation in the Cathedral*), Balzacian portraits of a society of vast economic contrasts, oppressed by ancient military and religious practices. Distanced now from the Cuban revolution, which he had enthusiastically supported as the best option for Latin America, and increasingly skeptical that the region's problem was capitalism, he devoted the 1970s to more playful, erotic, and purely literary themes.

BUT THE NEXT decade would be different, and in 1981, as a sign of things to come, Vargas Llosa published *The War of the End of the World*, a novel of Tolstoyan sweep. Most Latin American intellectuals read it without realizing that it touched on a permanent perplexity in the history of the continent's backward societies: the extremely violent reaction of the masses—usually led by a charismatic savior manipulating atavistic myths—to attempts at modernization. The rebellion of Tupac Amaru against the reforms of the Bourbons in Peru in 1780 was one such case. The beginning of the War of Independence in Mexico in 1810 was another, as was the revolution of Emiliano Zapata (1911–1919) and the Cristeros Rebellion (1926–1929). And still another was the revolt re-created by Vargas Llosa in his novel, in which the poor peasants of Canudos, headed by a messianic leader called the Conselheiro, defended "God's truth" against the "devil" incarnated in the new Brazilian republic at the end of the nineteenth century. Vargas Llosa's book foresaw not only many false-salvific moments in the subsequent history of Latin America (Chiapas most notably), but also a movement that is now the object of worldwide anxiety: the fundamentalist rebellion against the West.

Power and violence have always been central themes in Vargas Llosa's work, central to his exploration of the souls of men and the nature of evil. In the 1960s, power was represented in his writing by generalized abstract entities—the capitalist system, bourgeois society—that created and supported tyrants and their sinister followers. As time went by, however, the novelist began to change his focus and to note the oppressive qualities of the ideologies that claimed to liberate humanity. The various guerrilla movements in Central America that in turn awoke militarist specters in a never-ending cycle of death were prime examples. At the time Peru was suffering the presence of an extreme Maoist-style movement—the Shining Path—that assassinated peasant children so as to instruct them in the ethic of the "new man." With a few exceptions, the intellectuals of Latin America supported the guerrillas. Vargas Llosa took the unpopular path, condemning the guerrilla oppression as well as the military oppression and championing democracy.

The whirlwind of history had to catch up with Vargas Llosa, and it did. The massacre of Uchuraccay in 1983, according to his own account, was the event that changed the course of his life. A radical sector of the press and public opinion blamed the government of Belaúnde Terry for the strange deaths of eight journalists in the province of Ayacucho, which was the seat of Shining Path operations. In response, the president formed an investigatory commission of three members—one of them was Vargas Llosa—and eight advisers. After thirty days on the crime scene, and after collecting more than a thousand pages of testimony, the commission concluded that "the journalists were killed by the peasants of Uchuraccay, with the probable complicity of peasants from other Iquicha Indian towns, with no government forces present when the killings took place." Shortly afterward, Vargas Llosa published his essay "Story of a Killing" in the major Western papers, and in it he showed that the peasants had believed that the journalists belonged to the Shining Path. The experience—and the innumerable diatribes that his piece provoked—finally revealed the harsh truth to him: "The reality is that the wars between guerrillas and government troops are score-settlings of privileged sectors of society, in which the peasant masses are cynically and brutally used by those who claim to want to free them. It is the masses that always supply the greatest number of victims."

IN THIS MOMENT of "astonishment, indignation, and sadness," Vargas Llosa conceived of *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta* (1984). If Uchuraccay was a revelation, the novel was a reckoning with this revelation, with the ideological fanaticisms that had seduced the writer in the 1960s, the movements that, "seeking to create a heaven on earth," only managed to lock in oppression and poverty. To make things worse, the government of Alan García in Peru threatened to nationalize the country's private banks and to put the economy under state control. In such circumstances, it was no wonder that a sector of Peruvian society should see Vargas Llosa as a man heaven-sent, a sort of political exorcist, the only person in Peru capable of creating rational order out of the spiraling chaos and violence.

All his own precautions against the temptations of power suddenly collided with the duty of political commitment. The third volume of Vargas Llosa's collection of essays called *Against Wind and Tide* (a combative title inspired by Isaiah Berlin's *Against the Current*) reflected the writer's new calling. He championed liberal economic theories that were designed not to save Peru but to improve it. What was necessary was not the creation of a heaven on earth. No, heaven had to be left in its place and out of politics, and Peruvians had to fashion a more just home where they actually lived.

For a few months, fortune smiled on Vargas Llosa. Weeks before the elections, the polls gave him a wide lead. But the historical demons of Peru were loose. In *A Fish in the Water*, a memoir of his adventure in liberal politics that appeared in 1993, Vargas Llosa refers to the "manipulation, intrigue, pacts, betrayals, much calculation, not a little cynicism, and all kinds of trickery" that he endured during and after his presidential campaign, including the "mudslinging" and the "torrents of filth," all the insults, lies, and slanders that were heaped on him. One scene worthy of Buñuel engraved itself on his memory. It unfolded on a ferociously hot morning in a small town in the Chira Valley, as he was arriving with his entourage:

> I was met by a furious horde of men and women armed with sticks and stones and all kinds of blunt objects, their faces twisted by a hate that made them look like beings from the depths of time, a prehistory in which humans and animals were still indistinguishable ... roaring and shouting they threw themselves against the convoy like people fighting to save their lives or to sacrifice themselves, with a temerity and savagery that said everything about the almost inconceivable levels of deterioration to which life for millions of Peruvians had descended. What were they defending themselves against? What ghosts were behind those menacing clubs and knives?

The answer was: every ghost, beginning with the first ghost, the ghost of the Conquest. "Spaniards go home," they were shouting. There it was, intact, that "savage racial nomenclature that decides the fate of many" in Peru, a country where there is no possibility of civic dialogue, where "social structures are based on a kind of total injustice and violence is at the base of

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all human relations." Direct political exorcism was not just impossible: it was counterproductive. Vargas Llosa was routed at the polls. Weber had been right all along. Vargas Llosa's personal salvation lay along a different path.

When he was defeated in the elections, Vargas Llosa's friends recalled with trepidation the fate of another famous writer who at the age of thirty-seven fought a splendid electoral battle and was finally crushed by the combined forces of the political-military machine and an inexperienced electorate. José Vasconcelos left Mexico in 1929 for a long exile in Europe and the United States. There he wrote the four volumes of his memoirs, perhaps the greatest autobiography in the Spanish language. It was not just a detailed retelling of the ups and downs of his political career; it was also a confession—in the Augustinian sense—of his passions, errors, blunders, and sins. And rather than granting him serenity, the exercise deepened Vasconcelos's resentment not only of his enemies but also of his country and the West, which according to him was controlled by a Jewish conspiracy that ruled from Wall Street to the Kremlin.

Vasconcelos, the "teacher of America" and the champion of democratic freedoms, became a worshipper of absolute power. He edited *Timón*, the magazine of the Nazi embassy in Mexico; and he praised all the dictators of his time, from Franco to Trujillo (in fact, he wrote the introduction to a book of poems by Trujillo's wife); and he died, thirty years after his defeat, despising the educational work that he had done in his youth, and indifferent to politics, and in thrall to a mysticism that brought him no peace, but only intensified the flame of his anger.

Vargas Llosa was made in a different mold, of course; but it was not clear what his future after politics would be. He had something secure to which he could return from the frustrations of history: he had literature, which served him not merely as a place of refuge but also as a space for clarity and freedom. Like Vasconcelos, he chose the exorcism of autobiography, but unlike Vasconcelos it was not in order to flagellate himself by exhibiting his "sins of the flesh," or by airing the ideological obsessions that he had already worked out in his novels. He had already painted the portraits of the dark assassins, the grim soldiers, the conniving priests, the messianic leaders, the guerrillas, and the rest. Now it was the countenance of his own father that he decided to confront: the figure of his own personal dictator, Don Ernesto J. Vargas. He had confronted his father tacitly in his early novels, in which rebellion against the father is a recurrent theme; but now it was time for a direct reckoning.

Believing him dead and cherishing his hallowed memory, the young Vargas Llosa had lived for ten years surrounded by noble paternal figures from his mother's side of the family, until one day, all of a sudden, like a ghost his father reappeared on the scene and unburdened himself to his son about the full weight of his social resentments and his unacknowledged guilt. "He shouted ... and he hit my mother," and "she cried and listened, silent." The father hurled insults at the son in private and hurled blows at him in public. Terrorized daily by his father's threat to "get out that gun and shoot you, then kill myself," the boy would kneel like a penitent, "begging for forgiveness." When Don Ernesto learned that Mario wrote poetry, he took it as a sure sign that he would be a "faggot" and, alarmed, enrolled him in the military school Leoncio Prado, later exorcised by Vargas Llosa in *The Time of the Hero*. On page after page in his autobiographical work *A Fish in the Water*, as Vargas Llosa deliberately and meticulously told the story of his father, he faced head-on the "terrible rage" that he had come to harbor for him and his arbitrary, absolute, unpredictable power. In the process, however, his "simmering hatred" dissolved, if not into forgiveness then at least into compassion for a man "unreachable and blind to reason."

So what demon still remained for this writer to summon and to exorcise and to vanquish? There remained the dictator, the Latin American archetype of power, the figure principally responsible for Latin America's impoverishment, who in many different forms has so often reduced the history of the region's countries to a mere biography of power.

But another novel about dictators? Vargas Llosa was preceded in his endeavor by a long and admirable line of forebears, from Valle Inclán to García Márquez, from Asturias to Carpentier, from Roa Bastos to Uslar Pietri. Almost all the writers of the so-called boom in Latin American fiction had produced fictional accounts of the tyrants, their own local versions of Conrad's Nostromo, the strongman, the *cacique* or *caudillo*, lord of the gallows and the knife, who infiltrates the lives, the homes, and the minds of his people. Vargas Llosa had been interested in the figure of Trujillo since 1975, but the fates deferred this particular assignment until the writer had personally experienced the hell of politics, and endured not just individual hardship but also collective torment, born out of the fanaticism of racial, ideological, national, social, and religious

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identity. Then, the better to understand and to capture the nature of evil, he entered the twisted universe of Rafael Trujillo, the astounding feast of the goat. (In his heyday Trujillo was known as "the goat" for his insatiable sexual appetites.)

Besides the fictional character of Urania, who at the end of *The Feast of the Goat* reveals the traumatic event that caused her to forsake her country, the novel is centered around the days immediately leading up to and following the assassination of Trujillo on a Dominican highway in 1961. From this vantage point, Vargas Llosa employs his customary Faulknerian technique of mixing times and voices to re-create the whole story of Trujillo's dictatorship: the tyrant's chambers of power, his family, his court, his methods of domination. He re-creates, too, the history of the grievances of the plotters against him. After the assassination, the regime survives for a brief period (*Trujillismo* without Trujillo), which leads to a terrible hunt for the conspirators, who are almost all slaughtered. This hunt is the most horrifying part of the book. In time (and thanks to the political machinations of the poet Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo's court intellectual), the republic would achieve a kind of democracy. But it would take the Dominicans decades to free themselves internally from the specter of Trujillo.

RAFAEL LEÓNIDAS TRUJILLO, a soldier trained by the U.S. Marines during the American occupation of the island between 1916 and 1924, came to power in February, 1930 in a coup d'état. Born in 1891, of mixed ethnic origin (Spanish, Creole, and Haitian), he joined the national police, which in 1927 became the national army. Over his more than three decades of absolute power, Trujillo served formally as president four times, and the rest of the time he ruled through family members or servile associates. As well as maintaining absolute dominion over the only political party, he controlled the radio, television, and press either directly or by family proxy.

It was an innovation of Trujillo's rule, in Latin American history, that he turned his country into his own personal patrimony. He created and controlled (as the principal stockholder) monopolies in tobacco, rice, and sugar, and he had full control of the national bank and the electric company. By the end of his life, he controlled eighty percent of the industrial infrastructure and employed forty-five percent of the population. Although some of his measures promoted industrial development, urban and demographic growth, and education, Trujillo consolidated his position by the systematic repression of his adversaries, and committed at least one act of ethnic cleansing, against a defenseless group stranded on the Dominican border and hailing from Haiti, the other half of the island. The massacre took place in early October, 1937 and left eighteen thousand dead.

By the 1940s, Trujillo's dictatorship was brazen, absolute, and brimming with the grotesqueries that Vargas Llosa recalls in clinical detail. It was also utterly un-ideological. In this respect it was unlike the dictatorships that Latin America would come to know in the 1970s and 1980s at both ends of the ideological spectrum, from Pinochet and the Argentine generals to Castro—dictatorships that were frankly totalitarian.

TWO MYSTERIES INTERTWINE and clash in the novel with the precision of Greek drama: power and freedom. In the character of Trujillo, Vargas Llosa dissects with clinical skill the anatomy as well as the psychology of power. Here are all the physical attributes of domination: the paralyzing gaze of the tyrant, the myth of the man who does not sweat, the mania for uniforms and military decorations, and above all the irrepressible sexual posturing that—in an almost Taliban-like extreme of the culture of machismo—Trujillo used to impose his control.

Subjection though sex was at the center of the Trujillo phenomenon. Reconceiving the ancient *droit du seigneur*, he slept with the wives of his ministers, with their knowledge or at least their vague complicity, not just to test the unconditional nature of their servitude, but also to set himself up as the head of every family, a man with patrimonial rights over his own personal island. This obsessive process of humiliation, this enslavement of woman by man, touches a nerve in Vargas Llosa's imagination. That is why the protagonist of *The Feast of the Goat* is Urania, the prodigal daughter of one of Trujillo's acolytes. Urania—the voice of a melancholy historical conscience, clear-eyed, sealed off from any possibility of happiness—drives the novel. She returns to Santo Domingo decades after the collapse of the regime in order to confront her own terrifying ghosts and those of her native land.

The Feast of the Goat wanders among the collection of bizarre and appalling courtier types that all dictatorial regimes produce: some real, with first and last names; others fictitious, assembled from a variety of real-life prototypes. Present and rendered in lavish detail are Trujillo's assassin or personal policeman (the terrifying Johnny Abbés García, ex-socialist, specialist in espionage, torture artist), his economic administrator (the cynical and corrupt Henry Chirinos), his political adviser, his legal affairs man ("Cerebrito" Cabral, Urania's father), his style adviser and pimp (Manuel Antonio), and strangest of all, the court poet and intellectual Joaquín Balaguer, who, blind and almost paralyzed at the age of ninety-five, is still today a mythical figure in the Dominican Republic. ("While Balaguer lives and breathes, no one else will succeed," one of his party slogans recently proclaimed).

VARGAS LLOSA CAPTURES Balaguer's extreme subservience in a speech that the *poète de chambre* but shrewd politician delivers on the theme of the providential role of the dictator. The Dominican Republic had survived more than four centuries of countless adversities, including pirates, Haitian invasions, attempts at annexation, the massacre and the flight of whites—all of this by the grace of God's protection. Until 1930, that is, when Rafael Leónidas Trujillo had relieved God of this arduous mission: "A bold, energetic will that supports, in the march of the Republic toward the fulfillment of its destiny, the protective benevolence of supernatural forces ... God and Trujillo: here, in synthesis, is the explanation, first, of the survival of the nation, and second, of the present-day flourishing of Dominican life."

The dictator believed unswervingly in this version of events. But did Balaguer? "I practiced the kind of politics that could be practiced," he once confessed to Vargas Llosa. "I avoided women and corruption." Machiavelli would have admired the cunning of Balaguer—a small and seemingly frail man, a bachelor and a loner, a fine writer of modernist verse, a cultivated man—during his decades under Trujillo, but he would have been even more impressed by the political clockwork that Balaguer set in motion after the assassination of the dictator. In that truly Shakespearean drama, he did not flinch from allowing Trujillo's heirs to take action against the conspirators, but he later took advantage of the trail of blood to dissociate himself from the Trujillo dynasty, and to ingratiate himself with the international community and the Vatican, which in the last years of Trujillo's reign had withdrawn its support of the regime. At the same time, it was Balaguer who honored the conspirators in death, making them heroes of the realm. Plenty of people suspected that Balaguer knew about the conspiracy and even encouraged it. Today he is old and blind, and his health is failing him, but he is still influential, still a sorcerer of political brinkmanship. "That's politics," the unruffled Balaguer has remarked, "making your way among the corpses."

In this masterful novel, splendidly

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On a Stanza of H. Leyvick (1888–1962)

"Like careworn cats who schlep all their umpteen
Kittens around on agitated feet,
We go schlepping our poems by the neck, between
Our teeth, through every New York City street."

—Those were the Yiddish poets: (*ubi sunt*
Leyvick and Halpern, Leyeles, Mani Leib,
Glatshteyn and Teller, Yehoash—who by dint
Of innocence wove a Hiawatha, babe

In the Yiddishwoods, into another tongue?)
And so with us, decades later, hopeful boys
Moving with grimy manuscripts among
Earlier Villagers, through milder noise

And scenes more reticent in that earlier time,
Our poems typed in telltale pica fonts, too large
And pale to be elite, and with sublime
Chutzpah felt the new life was in our charge.

Sadly uncool cats, madly unknowing, bold
In some things, timid in others, we would see
Toothless Max Bodenheim, haunting the old
San Remo (God have mercy on such as we!);

In a corner, Chester Kallman, years before
We ever met him, and Isaac Rosenfeld
Walking on Bleecker Street ... how many more?
The sage and serious Milton we beheld

Once (Klonsky, that is) lurching through the rain,
And Alan Ansen with us still, alone
Among the pale allusive ghosts I strain
To see back down the decades' alley grown

Longer and narrower than the one that stretched
From the mid-century Village back to the New
York of the Yiddish poets, they who kvetched,
Muttered and kvelled and made their sad ado.

But we were kids, assimilated, they
As sadly adult as we would ever get
And writing in a language that today
Is sentenced to an early death. And yet,

Isn't it that our English—with its deep
And echoing caverns of the KJV
And roller-coaster rides twisting and steep,
Sublimely high and dense syntactically,

Fast down to low and dirty, and then back
To middle flight again—was just a dying
Yiddish, and whether in its yak-yak-yak
Quotidian palaver, or high-flying

Lyric ironies, now already in need
Of too much glossing. And yet after all
Our memories themselves can only read
Coherently these days amid a sprawl

Of marginal glosses (like the *"pica" and*
"Elite": the larger and the smaller fonts
On typewriters of almost any brand
In those days that this very text now wants).

Vsye poety Zhidy—all are Yids,
The poets—said Tsvetayeva, who knew;
And so the old guys, us de-Yiddished kids,
And, at most, a son or daughter or two,

The native speakers of our dialect,
Are few and dying, the philologists
To puzzle it out, at best a tiny sect,
Will fade like pale inscriptions in a mist

That burns off in no sun we'd ever know,
Or sightings of that phantom, the Sublime,
Or noon's last traces of an April snow,
Or voices lost in the loud flames of time.

John Hollander

translated, as always, by Edith Grossman, Vargas Llosa describes in detail the procedures of manipulation, the varieties of censorship, and the subtle gradations in the exercise of power, from the subtle insinuation that an individual has fallen out of favor to the most brutal tortures and killings. In the end, the greatest mystery lies in the voluntary, hypnotic collaboration of the masses with a single man: "Trujillo drew up from the depths of their souls a masochistic inclination, making it so that only when they were spat upon, mistreated, and utterly abject were they satisfied." There was "something more subtle and indefinable than fear" in the paralysis of the will not just of common citizens but also of brave characters such as General José René Román, who, having played a central role in the conspiracy against Trujillo, falls into a state of paralysis upon its successful completion, and acquiesces in his own horrifying and unnecessary martyrdom. Trujillo is still inside his men, Vargas Llosa seems to suggest, he still dominates them, he still enslaves them.

THE LINGERING EFFECTS of Trujillo's machinations are what inspired Vargas Llosa to embark on this novel. Such a subject, he decided, could not be presented in the easy form of a mocking, farcical, extravagant, or theatrical narrative, as has been the case with other novels about dictators, most notably *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. García Márquez's novel is certainly a masterpiece, but in it an almost orgiastic atmosphere prevails, an interminable orgasm of power, not devoid of desperation and a profound melancholy, that seizes the immortal and inviolate patriarch in his "vast kingdom of sorrow."

García Márquez does not so much describe the sorrow of the dictator as share it. The prose of his novel, with its verbal torrents and its arabesques of imagery, is itself an onomatopoeia of power. In this regard Vargas Llosa could not be more different, technically and philosophically, from García Márquez: indeed, *The Feast of*

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the Goat may be read as a brilliant retort to *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. Vargas Llosa does not identify with the dictator. Instead he documents the dictator with an almost lawyerly thoroughness, using as his fictional materials first-hand sources, reports, testimonies, and historical works. His prose is much more precise and disciplined, controlled by a critical eye intent on recreating the chambers of power critically and from within.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN Vargas Llosa's and García Márquez's treatments of tyranny is not only literary, it is also moral. Some writers are attracted by the erotics of power, in their works and in their lives. That fascination is the condition of their imaginings: the two-hundred-year-old patriarch of García Márquez, with five thousand children, who inspires laughter and disgust—sometimes even pity—is the ideal of the man of power rendered in a kind of prose poetry, in a lush jungle of words, an organic, zoological, telluric idea. If he sleeps with many women, it is because he has not found true love. He is a victim many times over: of himself, of fickle women, of the miracle-working reputation that he has acquired, of the dozens of Yankee ambassadors, of the Catholic Church, of the implacable conspirators who assassinated his wife and son, of the courtiers who trick him and manipulate him, and, above all, of time. In his novel, García Márquez surrenders to the pious and almost tender fascination for that "merciless and brutal authority" that once was "a feverish torrent that we saw gush out of its spring before our very eyes," but that in "the shoreless bog of the fullness of his autumn ... was so lonely in his glory that he didn't even have enemies anymore." Reading *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, one understands his tender friendship with Fidel Castro.

Vargas Llosa is something else. His fascination with his characters, even with the cruelest of them (such as Johnny Abbés), is of a different nature. He does not revel in their reality for even a single moment. Instead he embarks upon a vivisection, manifesting an immense desire to exorcise all these characters once and for all. He understands so as not to forgive. In his novel and in reality, Vargas Llosa is moved not by an attraction to power but rather by an urge to criticize it, and even to abolish it in those realms of human life where it has no value and should have no value.

So *The Feast of the Goat* is unlike other dictator novels, and also in another respect: it has likable characters (almost all of them martyrs) who represent the call of freedom. Vargas Llosa's novel includes the perfect antithesis to absolute power in the figure of Estrella Sadhalá, a Christian Arab of firm beliefs, who learns from his spiritual counselor and the island's papal nuncio that in the Catholic tradition, specifically in Thomas Aquinas, tyrannicide is justifiable as a final recourse against the powerful who have forgotten, abandoned, or betrayed the original sovereignty of a people, the search for the "common good."

"If there is anything I hate," Vargas Llosa has remarked, "anything that profoundly disgusts me and enrages me, it is dictatorship. It is not just a political conviction or a moral principle: it is a twisting inside me, a visceral reaction, maybe because I have endured many dictatorships in my own country, maybe because as a child I experienced in my own flesh the brutal imposition of authority." In biographical terms, and in the history of literature in Spanish, *The Feast of the Goat* is a passionate and incontrovertible defense of the opposite allegiance, the allegiance to freedom. Vargas Llosa has made liberalism into a motive for great fiction. And his novel arrives just as the liberal dream is slowly becoming a reality in Latin America, after two hundred years of dictatorships and anarchy, revolt and rebellion, guerrillas and revolutions. Power, I mean its living representatives and its demons, will not lose its hunger to possess and to rule all of life. Literature will not be able to prevent the appearance of still more dictators and assassins, still more fanatical and oppressive regimes. Still, as Orwell once observed, literature is our natural defense against dictatorship. For tyrants in their "vast kingdoms of sorrow," literature represents, in its radical freedom, something truly fearsome: the last word. ■

—translated by Natasha Wimmer

Immodest Proposals

By ROBERT ALTER

God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492–1945 by Claude Rawson

(Oxford University Press, 401 pp., $35)

GENOCIDE, ALAS, IS a common practice across the globe and across historical eras. But it has now come to haunt Western consciousness in an especially unsettling way, for the obvious reason that on European soil in the twentieth century it was implemented with a systematic rigor and an ideological dedication that had not been seen before or elsewhere. In his important new book, Claude Rawson argues that whereas atrocities of this kind had not been seen, they had in fact been strongly imagined; and he argues also that there may be a disturbing connection, though by no means a simple causal one, between the imagining and the enactment. His book, as he succinctly remarks at the outset, "is concerned with the spectrum of aggressions which inhabit the space between such figures of speech [about exterminating certain groups of people] and the implementation."

Over the past two decades, with evidently growing vehemence, the critique of Western civilization has become the great preoccupation of the humanities in American institutions of higher learning, especially in departments of literary studies. (Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which appeared in 1978, was certainly one point of departure for this general trend, though not all the current assaults on the pernicious influence of the West can be traced to Said.) It is Western civilization, we are repeatedly told, that has perpetrated the evils of colonialism on a global scale, and in the postcolonial era it is Western capitalism that continues to exploit and to "immiserate" the masses of the developing world. The legacy of enslavement and murder that is abundantly manifested in colonialism, it is sometimes claimed, was merely brought to its logical fulfillment in the concentration-camp universe created by the Nazis.

ROBERT ALTER's most recent book is *Canon and Creativity: Modern Writing and the Authority of Scripture* (Yale University Press).

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God, Gulliver, and Genocide might at first blush seem to have a certain similarity to all these fashionable criticisms of Western values and actions, but it could not be more different from them in its freedom from ideological agendas, its refusal to cook the evidence, its ability to see moral nuance, and its steady sense of the complexity of historical causation. Rawson has long been one of our most illuminating authorities on eighteenth-century English satire and on Swift in particular; but in his new book he casts a much wider net, exhibiting the same meticulous erudition in his treatment of Montaigne and Wilde and Shaw as he does in his discussion of the English Augustan writers. Yet Swift remains the central point of reference, taking up perhaps half the book and providing the most powerful instance of the moral ambiguity of the satiric imagination that is Rawson's subject.

What Rawson bracingly demonstrates is that humanistic inquiry still can be, and deserves to be, an empirically grounded activity. He decries the "selective use of evidence to support currently approved indignations (or the earlier ones they replace)," and he goes on to cite a tart characterization by Marjorie Perloff of how intellectual arrangements are now generally made in the groves of academe: "The preferred method is to know what one wants to prove . . . and then to collect one's supportive exempla, the game being to ignore all 'evidence' that might point in a contrary direction."

Much of Rawson's book is a documentation of Western imaginings of other races, ethnicities, and cultures, from Montaigne's "*Des cannibales*" to the propaganda of the Third Reich. (To Rawson's credit, in discussing this topic he avoids the pretentiousness of using the capitalized and hypostasized form "the Other," and he also eschews the Gallic barbarity of the abstraction "alterity.") Now, many of the images that he considers, both verbal and visual, are violent and troubling: the ethnic or racial others are imagined with both prurience and clinical condescension as embodiments of sexual license and depravity, as human approximations of the bestial, and hence as fit objects for subjugation, exploitation, and ultimately extermination. Still, as Rawson repeatedly shows, the simple story of racist abomination told by the postcolonial critics often does not correspond to the ambivalences or even the dialectical character of the actual Western images. And the others are often imagined, as Montaigne illustrates, not on a binary model of the good Europeans and the savage non-Europeans, but on a triadic model, a more complicated model that is not designed to provide any ideological satisfaction, in which both benign and brutal varieties of the others are considered as antitheses to the writer's own culture.

Consider a literally graphic example of a dialectical or self-critical representation of the Western perception of the other. Between 1810 and 1815, a woman named Sartje Baartman, evidently of Bushman stock, was brought for public exhibition to London and Paris, where she was popularly labeled the Hottentot Venus and excited great interest on the part of Europeans fascinated by the exotic pendulous breasts and the large bottoms of African women. She was made the subject of numerous engravings and may even have helped inspire the later vogue of the bustle. A German illustration of the period, reproduced in Rawson's book, shows a European gentleman seated in an armchair, his dog by his side, peering through a telescope at the Hottentot Venus, who is stationed on what looks like a rock pedestal, actually quite close to him, with her bulging rear end pointed toward the telescope.

Sander Gilman, a scholar who has made an academic career of chronicling racist stereotypes, describes the picture as an "erotic caricature of the Hottentot Venus," with the voyeur flatly defined as "a white, male observer." What Gilman astonishingly overlooks, as Rawson duly notes, is that the most obtrusive caricature in the engraving is the face of the man looking into the telescope. The man's face is depicted as a grotesque cross between the head of a bloated frog and the head of a dewlapped bulldog. The telescope thus becomes a satiric joke about European voyeurism; and, as Rawson suggests, the woman's thrusting posterior figures as a gesture of well-deserved contempt directed at the fat man with the telescope who is ogling her. The image is not an expression of power, it is a criticism of power. The nineteenth-century artist, it would seem, had his own acerbic awareness of how his fellow European males leered at women of other races. In his damning intuition of sexual and racial prejudice, he needed no prompting from postmodern critics.

IT IS IMPORTANT for Rawson to establish that there is a long and varied tradition in Western thinking that sees certain segments of humankind, or even humankind altogether, as so degraded that they deserve to be wiped out. He takes this tradition all the way back to the Flood story in Genesis, noting that some version of the biblical phrase "to destroy them from the face of the earth" is often invoked by later writers. (Another biblical book, as I shall presently propose, may be still more pertinent.) Yet it is Jonathan Swift who is the ultimate touchstone of Rawson's argument, owing to the untrammeled freedom of imagination that Swift permitted himself on these topics, almost as though he were giving vent cathartically to the darkest, most tabooed impulses in the paradoxically astringent clarity of his satiric vehicles. His work, as Rawson aptly puts it, "embodies a radical critique (radical in the sense of reaching down to roots) which refuses to shrink from the violence of its own thinking." A concise summary of the distinctive tenor of Swift's imagination offered later in the book could scarcely be surpassed: "an unmoralized surreal eruptiveness which transcends or exceeds, in a sphere of unfettered ludic aggression, the borders of satire or hortatory discourse."

The crucial Swiftian texts for the exercise of this "ludic aggression" are *A Modest Proposal* and the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels*, though Rawson also glances at a famous passage from *A Tale of a Tub* and at a couple of the satiric poems and a few of the less familiar essays. *A Modest Proposal*, which was written in 1729, has long been used as a textbook illustration of satiric irony. The Proposer's dispassionate and ostensibly pragmatic suggestion that the Irish poor be encouraged to breed their infants to be served on the tables of the propertied classes, both as a source

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of income and as a means of reducing overpopulation, is conventionally seen as a mordant satire on the cold-blooded English exploiters of the Irish masses.

Rawson, providing instructive details of historical context for the essay, demonstrates that the aggressive energy of this fantasy of a home industry of cannibalism cannot be so neatly contained within a frame of neatly ordered satiric irony. Swift's aggression, he argues, is directed not only against the exploiters, but also against the Irish. Imputations of cannibalistic practices among the Irish in fact had some currency in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the notion that the Irish masses were scarcely better than beasts—a notion that Swift may not have altogether dismissed—was often asserted. Sir John Temple, the father of Swift's patron, writing in 1646, described them as "living like beasts, biting and devouring one another."

Rawson is surely right in saying that such language strongly adumbrates the ferocious representation of the Yahoos in *Gulliver's Travels*. Both texts draw on an idea that may seem odd to us now: that the Irish were genetically akin to the savages who lived beyond the European pale, and that they exhibited the flat noses, the large lips, and the other gross features supposedly characteristic of those uncouth peoples. In *A Modest Proposal*, Swift is careful never to bring to mind the common accusation that the Irish might actually be practicing cannibalism—just as Montaigne, writing about cannibals in the New World, sharply satirizes his fellow Frenchman by comparing them invidiously to the "savages," but never mentions documented instances, about which he knew, of cannibalism during the religious wars in France in his own time. Eating human flesh in Swift's essay is confined to a strictly metaphorical function; but the incendiary historical materials out of which this fantasy is shaped make its moral direction precariously unstable. As is often the case in Swift, the vectors of aggression go in opposite directions simultaneously.

This overdetermination of the aggressive imagination reaches its apogee in the horrific images of the Yahoos in *Gulliver's Travels*. The snarling, stinking, vicious, and lubricious Yahoos are drawn from defamatory notions about the Irish and about the savages of the non-European world, with "the equations between humans, humanoids, savages, and animals ... in constant and volatile play." Yet Swift, though he did not hesitate to tap some of the most dank underground currents of ethnic or racial prejudice in his satiric invention, can scarcely be accused of either racism or misogyny in *Gulliver's Travels*, as postcolonial and feminist critics have variously accused him, because the Yahoos are, after all, an image of humankind as a whole, from which no race, culture, class, or gender is excepted. They embody, as Rawson neatly puts it, an "equivocating and protracted tease, which assimilates humankind to its own despised subgroups, as well as to humanoid and animal analogues," and it is precisely this disquieting process of assimilation that constitutes "a Swiftian signature."

IT IS HARDLY startling, of course, to observe that Swift's satire often reflects a general rage against, or disgust with, the human species rather than a particular segment of it. What now looks different in his work, after the century of modern genocide, is the unsettling way in which satiric fantasy has proved to anticipate grisly historical implementation from 1939 to 1945. Not every reader may recall that a recurrent subject of debate in the assembly of Houyhnhnms is "whether the *Yahoos* should be exterminated from the Face of the Earth." Swift uses this same stern biblical phrase in relation to paupers in an essay titled *Proposal for Giving Badges to the Beggars in All the Parishes of Dublin*, an unironic proposal that unfortunately foreshadows the notorious practice that the Nazis adopted to mark off the population of *Untermenschen* that they would eventually proceed to murder. Gulliver is reported to have made shoes out of Yahoo skins, bird traps out of their hair, and a boat caulked with the fat of these creatures and covered "with the skins of *Yahoos* well stitched together." (Equally in *A Modest Proposal*, the skin of Irish babies is recommended for the manufacture of fine gloves for ladies and boots for gentlemen.) This horrific invention in turn draws on classical precedents, as the learned Rawson alerts us: "Swift is remembering accounts in Herodotus and Strabo of Scythian tribes which manufactured napkins and garments from human scalps, weapon-covers from skin and fingernails."

Though the Nazis' use of the bodies of murdered Jews for the manufacture of lampshades and soap may have been sensationalistically exaggerated in some early reports, the fact that such horrors could have been committed at all is a logical consequence, as in Swift, of the uncompromising re-definition of human beings as belonging to a category outside, or below, humanity. Swift's strategy of narrative exposition exerts an almost scary effectiveness in realizing this re-definition: when Gulliver first encounters the Yahoos, he sees only noxious, filthy beasts, scrabbling about on all fours, exhibiting "paws" and "claws," and he has no inkling that he and they are anatomically identical; eventually he is forced to recognize that these wretched animals are a perfectly just representation of the human species, himself included. Once again, there is a disconcerting correspondence to the Nazi procedure of first representing the Jews as subhuman in propaganda and then dehumanizing them in the camps as the last step before "exterminating" them, like vermin.

AS TO THE radical impulse of genocide, Rawson uncovers a surprisingly broad spectrum of injunctions to extirpation, many of them referring to the Irish, from Spenser to Shaw to the outraged cry of Conrad's Kurtz: "Exterminate all the brutes." At least in our own culture (and it would be surprising if other cultures should prove entirely innocent on this score), there has been an extraordinary license of discourse about the destruction of entire populations for more than three millennia. Rawson, as I have noted, takes this murderous language back to the Flood story, and also to the story of Sodom, in Genesis. Despite the frequent later borrowing of the phrase "from the face of the earth" in conjunction with acts of total destruction, there is a different feel to the story of the annihilation of humankind in Genesis because it is embedded in a legendary past and drawn directly from Mesopotamian myths about the destruction of humanity by the angered gods, so that the victims of the Deluge do not seem either a part of history or even a persuasive allegory of future history. But the decisive consideration is that the agent of destruction is God himself, which puts the terrible plan in a rather different perspective from that suggested by a communal assembly deliberating in *Gulliver's Travels* about whether a program of extermination of the local humanoids should be undertaken.

The truly disturbing biblical precedent for the imagination of genocide appears in Numbers and, even more urgently, in Deuteronomy. There Israel is enjoined to utterly destroy the pagan peoples of the land of Canaan that it is about to conquer—to place them under the ban (*herem*), to smash their altars, to pulverize their icons, to kill all their men, women, and children. The archaeological evidence reassuringly suggests that this project of total destruction was never implemented, that it reflects instead a kind of ferocious monotheistic fantasy—one eminent biblical scholar calls it "utopian"—employed to further Deuteronomy's ideological program of absolute separation from pagan practices and population in a seventh-century B.C.E. setting where in fact peoples and practices constantly intermingled.

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What makes these exhortations to genocide different from the Flood story—what unfortunately points them toward future horrors, where a way of talking turns into a way of doing—is that the agents of destruction are human, urged to destroy with zeal as part of a higher mission. This model was not lost on Oliver Cromwell. In an instance cited by Rawson, the Puritan leader told his troops, embarking from Bristol for a campaign of conquest and massacre in Ireland in 1649, that they were latter-day Israelites enjoined to wipe out the idolatrous people of Canaan.

All such macabre adumbrations of the most notorious modern program of systematic mass murder might seem to lend themselves to the anti-Western rhetoric of inculpation that passes for intellectual analysis in many academic circles today; but Rawson, in insisting on careful discriminations, distances himself equally from the intransigent critics of European colonialism and from the complacencies of their academically conservative—which is to say politically liberal—adversaries. The aim that he lays out in the introduction of his book is to "uncouple Swift from the indignant diatribes of self-righteous postcolonial censors, as well as from the well-intentioned ministrations of 'liberal' sensibilities of the late Ph.D. era ... performing the equal and opposite irrelevance of refashioning Swift into a benign upholder of favorite causes."

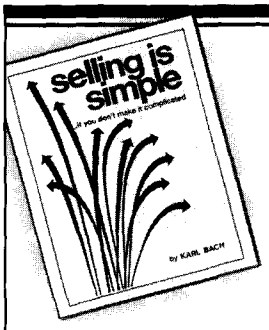
God, Gulliver, and Genocide might be thought of as a study in the workings of the literary imagination of rage, with all the moral irresponsibilities that it entails. The various writers explored here, confronted with what struck them as intolerable manifestations of human barbarity, degradation, and perversity, created what must have felt to them like cleansing fantasies—or in some cases merely rhetorical gestures—of destruction, in which whole classes, or ethnicities, or religious groups, or humankind itself, would be wiped out because they patently resisted any conceivable reformation. This is not to say that the writers were serious advocates of genocide (though one wonders a little at the "utopian" project of the Deuteronomist); and Swift, an implacable and irascible man but by no means an inhumane one, would surely have been horrified by the Nazi death camps and would have seen in them a horrendous confirmation of the vulpine nature of the human animal against which he repeatedly railed.

Rawson does not claim that these lethal imaginings constitute a unique pathology of Western civilization. What seems to be implied, rather, is that they reflect the West's particular literary articulation of a complex of aggressive impulses that are a regrettable part of the general human legacy. Rawson takes pains throughout the book to resist misleading equations. "Confronting an unwelcome analogy," he nicely observes, "is not the same as asserting the similarities it implies." What, then, is the relation of Gulliver to genocide? The sensible conclusion of this book is that the link is indeterminate, perhaps involving some oblique causal element or perhaps reflecting merely a certain murky affinity of mind, but in either case not to be blandly dismissed.

Observing that both Swift and Sade drew on bookish or documentary sources that they outdid in their own literary fantasies, only to be outdone in turn by the Nazi enterprise, Rawson concludes: "What that enterprise ... may have owed to bookish sources and what it merely took from common motions of the human mind, is not a question which can be answered, though it insists on being asked." Over the years there has been a great deal of talk, which seems especially appealing to literary people, about an almost theological uniqueness of the Nazi program of genocide, a uniqueness that puts the Shoah beyond representation, analogy, and language itself. One of the important implications of Rawson's argument, though it is not one that he himself spells out, is that the Western imagination has been busy representing, or fantasizing, such horrors for millennia, articulating a rich language for them—with Swift its most uncompromising master—that was abundantly present in European culture, whether or not the Nazis were consciously prompted by any of it. In this case as in others, the study of history and the artifacts of culture uncovers ample precedents for the seemingly unprecedented.

Satire is in certain ways the most intellectually controlled of literary genres, and the almost geometric logic of both *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Modest Proposal* clearly manifests this quality of control. At the same time, there is an emotional vehemence, albeit channeled into formally lucid structures, that defies control, and for this Rawson invokes the crucial term "slippage":

> The controlled rhetorical slippages I have been discussing, and to which Swift [in an essay that talks about taking hyperbole too literally] partly alludes, are part of an imperfect system of constraints on radical violence, as well as a species of invitation to it. It seems likely that some of history's great genocidal outbursts have been unplanned results



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> of outlooks and ways of speaking whose murderous content was not generally or widely intended to be taken at face value.

There is an instructive analogy between Rawson's argument and Roger Shattuck's argument in *Forbidden Knowledge*, about one-third of which was devoted to an unflinching scrutiny of the most horrific aspects of the novels of Sade. Shattuck seeks to understand the disturbing implications of "forbidden knowledge that we may not forbid" even when it leads to ghastly practical consequences. (He documents cases of pathological killers who were sedulous students of Sade's novels.) As Shattuck recognizes, censorship is clearly not an option, because a free society must allow the imagination its full prerogatives to delve into whatever dark places to which it may be drawn. What he argues in the case of Sade, who has been elevated by modern French intellectual tradition to the status of a brave and profound moral philosopher, is that he be seen unblinkingly for what he is: "potential poison, polluting to our moral and intellectual environment."

The case is surely not the same for Swift—though at one point, as we have noted, Rawson has occasion to bracket the two writers—or for Spenser, Baudelaire, Shaw, and other writers who have given vent to exhortations to extermination, for in their work the language of extirpation is set in some kind of humane frame of reference, or is to a degree insulated from reality by its deployment as metaphor or rhetorical gesture, what Swift calls "hyperbole." If essential distinctions need to be made between the notion of extirpating the Yahoos and the Final Solution, distinctions also have to be made, as Rawson would agree, among these different writers.

Still, the monitory idea that Rawson traces so well is that even metaphor has its responsibilities. One purpose of imaginative literature may be to provide a satisfying outlet, a vehicle of cathartic fantasy, for violent impulses that are shared by writer and audience. Yet it is a simple act of moral wisdom not to explain away the expressions of violence as neatly fashioned instruments of higher and humane ends. It behooves us instead to acknowledge that works of literature can conceivably contribute to creating a context of imaginative enablement for the perpetration of terrible acts in the real world. ■

Both/And

By ERIN LEIB

Kierkegaard: A Biography by Alastair Hannay

(Cambridge University Press, 496 pp., $39.95)

IN MAY, 1937, Søren Kierkegaard, a student at the University of Copenhagen, met Regine Olsen, age fifteen, who was visiting Bolette Rørdam, a family friend. His life, and modern thought, would never be the same again. He was immediately enchanted by her, and began to court her. "In the next moment you are so close to me, so present, so overwhelmingly filling my spirit that I am transfigured to myself and feel that here it is good to be," he scribbled in his journal after spending some moments by her side. He was thoroughly smitten by the "lovely child." She engendered a "lust for life" in this man otherwise shadowed by the weight of a demanding father and a demanding God. She offered him momentary release from the dark shackles of his (arguably self-induced) suffering.

On September 8, 1840, Kierkegaard proposed to Regine, committing himself to the animated life that she would provide. But almost a year later, in August, 1841, he broke the engagement. "So as not to go through more rehearsals of what must happen in any case, something that when it does happen will surely give strength, let it be done," he wrote. "Above all," he continued, "forget the one who writes this: forgive someone who, whatever else, could not make a girl happy." Needless to say, this expression of selflessness does not tell the whole story.

The remainder of Kierkegaard's life attests to the fact that it was not only the consideration of Regine's happiness that motivated his withdrawal, but also the consideration of his own. He appears to have discovered that he was philosophically opposed to his own happiness, or that his own unhappiness was the only possible origin for his philosophy. He believed that there is a deep connection between anguish—or fear or trembling or dread—and truth. Inwardness demanded isolation: this was his conviction. His union with heaven would be impeded by a union on earth. As Alastair Hannay writes in his thorough intellectual biography, "Helplessly pinned down under the weight of melancholy and sadness, it was in these that he had to find anything infinite in his life, not in the yea-saying, world-affirming experience of love."

Kierkegaard pleaded with Regine to forget him, but he then did all in his power to make that impossible. Over and over again, throughout his voluminous writings, he made himself a presence in her life precisely by dwelling upon his absence from her life. In trying hard to render himself peripheral, he further asserted—even begged for—his centrality. His abjection and his faith in the cosmic significance of his own fate went hand in hand.

IN ADDITION TO his religious and philosophical writings, Kierkegaard kept journals chronicling the tumult of his emotional and spiritual states. About Regine, he wrote retrospectively in 1849: "Either I become yours or you will be allowed to wound me so deeply, wound me in my melancholy and my relation to God, so deeply that, although parted from you, I will yet remain yours." Either he could embrace her in the flesh, or he could feel her effects in spirit. He elected to make his love infinite by renouncing its earthly form and thereby insulate his own singularity in the process. But in so doing, he never renounced his love at all; he eternalized it. Johannes de Silentio, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous author of *Fear and Trembling* (1843), expresses this sentiment well:

> His love of the princess would take on for him the expression of an eternal love, would acquire a religious character, be transfigured into a love of the eternal being which, although it denied fulfillment, still reconciled him once more in the eternal consciousness of his love's validity in an eternal form that no reality can take from him.

One method of such eternalization was to distance the object of his desire, and even to repulse her. In his first major work, *Either/Or* (1843), "edited" by the pseudonymous Victor Eremita, the aesthetically driven narrator seduces a woman for his enjoyment alone. In portraying a character with no regard for women whatsoever, Kierkegaard hoped to offend Regine's sensibilities, to convince her that

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he was maliciously inclined, that his love was nothing more than a selfish seduction. In so doing, he hoped to allay her injury at his act of unkindness; she could be comforted if he could seem worthless. Moreover, the work would demonstrate that his bachelorhood was itself a kind of service to the world, by showing Regine what a talented man unfettered by the responsibilities of marriage could do. While the substance of *Either/Or* was, in large measure, a defense of marriage, Kierkegaard insinuated that for some individuals the best path is the second-best path—to live outside the conventions of marital and civic virtue.

KIERKEGAARD'S OTHER writings also show that he was obsessed with marriage, and with the question of exceptionality. *Stages on Life's Way* (1845) takes up the ethical dimensions of marriage and argues, among other things, that it ought to be the social norm. The latter half of the book examines the few justifiable exemptions from that norm. Kierkegaard was irresistibly drawn toward the notion of union and toward a rationale for his own decision not to so unite. Writing volumes about marriage was his stratagem for never leaving it behind. He was married to the idea of marriage—for, to him, it was a profoundly philosophical idea.

When he died on November 11, 1855, Kierkegaard left all of his scant possessions to Regine, now the wife of Friedrich Schlegel. This letter to his brother was found in his desk under lock and key:

> Dear Brother,
> It is, of course, my will that my former fiancée, Mrs. Regine Schlegel, inherit unconditionally whatever little I can leave behind. If she will not accept it for herself, she is to be offered it on condition that she may be willing to administer it for distribution to the poor.
>
> What I want to express in this way is that to me an engagement was and is just as binding as a marriage, and that therefore my estate is her due exactly as if I had been married to her.
>
> Your brother,
> S. Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard's conflicted relationship with Regine Olsen in this way arrives at its logical conclusion. He was as bound to her when he protested being bound to her as when he extolled the virtues of being so bound. All fourteen years that he spent alone he was entangled with her, embracing her without embracing her. His love, in sum, was a dialectical love. He was never with his soul's object and he was never without his soul's object; and it is crucial to recognize that this became the structuring principle not only of his life, but also of his thought. "To me an engagement was and is just as binding as a marriage": this melancholic but defiant sentence—this paradoxical promotion of a partial commitment into a complete commitment—poignantly encapsulates the philosophical move made by Kierkegaard throughout his works.

THE GREAT IRONY of Kierkegaard's dialectical relationship with Regine is that he devoted much of his intellectual life to fighting dialectics. He flourished during Denmark's so-called Golden Age, in the years in the nineteenth century when Danish thinkers and artists mingled with their European counterparts and participated in a truly continental discourse. The Danish-German connection was particularly strong owing to the University of Kiel, one of Denmark's two major academic institutions and a German-speaking university. Danish philosophers and theologians often wrote in German (many with aspirations toward Berlin, Tübingen, Jena, or Göttingen), and they maintained contact with the legendary figures of the German world, with Goethe, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel. Hegel in particular was a growing force during this time. His Berlin lectures were extremely well-attended, and the enthusiasm for them crossed borders. Danish intellectuals jumped on *Geist*'s bandwagon and transported Hegelianism into their classrooms and their culture.

Hegel was most admired in his time for his systematic philosophy of Absolute Knowledge, born of a dialectical method, or "logic." He famously argued that thought, which he took to be the ultimate reality, develops through a triadic formula of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which appeared in 1807, he explained (if that is the word) that statements about reality can never fully accommodate all of reality's content, and so opposing statements are necessarily generated. Those statements in turn are found to be deficient, and so middle grounds, or syntheses, are developed. These syntheses do not completely overturn the stages that precede them. They contain them, and orient them in a way that better accounts for reality. Often these syntheses then become the theses for further rounds of evaluation.

Through this dialectical chain, we ascend to greater levels of rationality and self-consciousness. As thought becomes more rational, it becomes more spiritual, which means, for Hegel, that it becomes more conscious of itself and its own significance. History is the progressive path toward the climax of all syntheses, the Speculative Idea, or Absolute Knowledge defined as "spirit knowing itself as spirit."

Hegel's dialectical, world-historical vision is a spectacularly idealistic one. Human history has a telos and it is knowable. Since time immemorial, we have been driving toward an Idea, a self-perpetuating, all-encompassing, truth-revealing System (or "Science"). We have been edging toward a fully realized understanding of ourselves and of our world. And now—in the early nineteenth century, that is—we have almost arrived. The end of philosophy is upon us, with the end of history. (Interestingly, though Hegel saw the Prussian state as a uniquely important advance in the System, he saw young America as its culmination. In this regard he boldly remarked that "in the era to come, this [America] is where the burden of the world's history will reveal itself.")

JOHAN LUDVIG HEIBERG was the primary popularizer of Hegel's doctrine in Copenhagen. He owned and edited the most influential literary and philosophical journals of the time. He was also a professor at the University of Kiel. In 1824, he traveled to Berlin to hear Hegel's lectures and visited the great seer at home. He returned to Denmark a devoted Hegelian. In 1825, he left the university and moved back to Copenhagen, where he became the director of the Royal Danish Theater and a critic, editor, and publisher. He disseminated his ideas for decades through his own journal, *Copenhagen's Flying Post*. When Heiberg married the actress Johanne Luise Pätges in 1831, he became the center of Copenhagen's cultural life. The Heiberg circle became the leading Copenhagen salon, where young Kierkegaard was welcomed.

Hegel was also in the air at Kierkegaard's university, the University of Copenhagen. In particular, Kierkegaard's mentor Poul Martin Møller was bitten by the Hegel bug early. While he went on to develop his own philosophical repertoire, even pointing out certain limitations in the overly speculative Hegelian System, Møller served as a quiet conduit of Hegelian thinking for his students. And Frederick Sibbern, Kierkegaard's second instructor in philosophy, was rumored to have visited with Hegel. Like Møller, he had some disagreements with him, but he stayed in the camp. The two of them sympathized with the totalizing ambitions of the philosophy of the System.

Though Kierkegaard is known for being a rabid anti-Hegelian, Hannay's biography offers substantial evidence that his position was not at all consistent. Indeed,

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at the beginning of his career Kierkegaard was quite taken by the voguish philosophy. Like most everyone else in Copenhagen, he was attracted by its freshness and its grandeur. A contemporary reports that Kierkegaard was "apparently overwhelmed" by Hegel.

HANNAY OPENS HIS book with a portrait of a pro-Hegelian Kierkegaard—this is one of the contributions of his book—making his first public appearance. In a student lecture in November, 1835, at the meeting of the Student Union at the University of Copenhagen on the limits of the liberal press, Kierkegaard expressed at least two important Hegelian concepts. He spoke of his age's striving for the "Idea," as well as of the a priori relationship of content to form. "One recalls constantly that it isn't through form one receives life but through life receives form": this is a pure Hegelian pronouncement, for Hegel had strongly argued, with regard to history and to aesthetics, that form (that is, sense or coherence) can be perceived only in retrospect.

Kierkegaard's first published works also made use of Hegelian words and concepts. In September, 1838, *From the Papers of One Still Living* introduced his signature idea of authorial distance—his philosophy of pseudonymity. The book brandishes the statement that it was "published by S. Kierkegaard against his will." This evasion of responsibility continued to feature in a variety of ways in later works, and it can be viewed as a further affirmation of Idealistic preference for content over form. In stepping away from his work, Kierkegaard offers it entirely to his readers. He asks them to put their own stamp on his thoughts, to make their own sense of it. The developments of systems can be understood only retrospectively, and so must be lived linearly.

In this work Kierkegaard also introduces the concept of a "life-view" born of experience. It "is more than a totality or sum of principles maintained in its abstract indeterminacy; it is more than experience, which is as such always atomistic; it is in fact the transubstantiation of experience, it is an unshakeable security in oneself won from all experience...." This is a nod toward the Hegelian notion of a guiding Idea born of failed or transcended ideas (or experiences). The mode of acquisition of a life-view is also remarkably dialectical, in that an increase in the search for knowledge reveals new desires that create new possibilities that entail new desires. Kierkegaard was clearly not out of Hegel's clutches.

But he was hardly a docile or doctrinaire Hegelian. In a journal entry that dates from a year before *From the Papers of One Still Living*, Kierkegaard ridiculed Hegel's mechanical and undiscerning dialectic:

> And how in recent years has Hegel fared, Hegel, that one among modern philosophers whose rigorous form would surely most likely command silence? Hasn't the logical triad been out to the most ludicrous effect? It was no surprise to me that my shoemaker had found it could also be applied to the development of boots, since—as he remarked—even here the dialectic, always the first stage in life, expressed itself in the squeaking, however insignificant it may seem, and which certainly hasn't escaped the attention of some depth psychologist, whereas the unity only comes later—in which respect his boots far surpassed all others, which usually fell apart in the dialectic.

This mockery, and its wickedly untechnical language, is much more characteristic of the viciously anti-Hegelian Kierkegaard who is more widely known.

HANNAY ATTRIBUTES Kierkegaard's major philosophical shift toward explicit anti-Hegelianism to a personal gripe against the philosopher and theologian H. L. Martensen. Martensen, who propounded a Christological variety of Hegelianism, was appointed to the position of lecturer at the University of Copenhagen in 1838, taking over for Møller after his death. Martensen spread Hegel's views rapidly, and his lectures were highly influential. Kierkegaard, who probably already felt resentful toward the man who had replaced his mentor Møller, responded very hostilely to this popularization of philosophy. He called Martensen "the greatest humoristic Capitalist" who gave students the impression that "they could swallow everything in half a year." Martensen devalued philosophy by making it easy, and in so doing exposed the flimsiness of the theories that he was espousing. In Kierkegaard's view, nothing worth thinking about can be fully understood in half a year. Martensen was also only five years older than Kierkegaard, and so posed a serious challenge to Kierkegaard's ascendancy in the university.

Hannay overstates the case, though, for a purely biographical reading of Kierkegaard's anti-Hegelian turn. Chronologically the claim is baseless, since Kierkegaard's dissertation, *On the Concept of Irony*, which was submitted in 1841, a year after Martensen's further promotion to the position of Extraordinary Professor, explicitly acknowledged a debt to Hegel, prompting him years later to lament: "Influenced as I was by Hegel and by everything modern.... Oh, what a Hegelian fool I was!" If it was Martensen's arrival that was really responsible for the shift, a new vitriol should be noticeable around 1838; but no such thing is evident. Kierkegaard's relationship to Hegel simply cannot be charted linearly. Instead he related to the philosopher of dialectic dialectically.

Even before the pro-Hegelian stance of his dissertation and the sympathetic tone of *From the Papers of One Still Living*, Kierkegaard had already articulated anti-Hegelian arguments. In 1837, in response to the Hegelian dissertation of Adolph Peter Adler, he wrote long expositions in his journals detailing the faults of the philosophy. There he focused primarily on the impossibility of making metaphysical claims about history. "But in so far as metaphysical thought also claims to think historical reality, it gets in a mess," he remarked. "How to specify metaphysical reality in relation to historical reality?" This theme—the discord between ideality and reality—would be developed in many of his works, most expansively in *Philosophical Fragments* (1844).

In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard railed against another aspect of Hegelian thinking, namely the conflation of religion and reason. According to Hegel,

> the riches of thought and culture belonging to the philosophic Idea should become united to the Christian principle. For the philosophic Idea is the Idea of God, and thought has the absolute right of reconciliation, or the right to claim that the Christian principle should correspond with thought.

God is reason incarnate in such a scheme. For Kierkegaard, though, religion must be protected from philosophy, because there is an independent God that makes demands of humanity. Abraham's story, as it is presented in *Fear and Trembling*, illustrates a rift between reason and God. Abraham is a hero because he acts against reason. In readying himself to sacrifice his son in response to divine command, he fights the Hegelian conflation and is rewarded.

Kierkegaard argues for this separation most powerfully in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (1846), in which he solidifies the chasm between philosophy and faith. He takes his first jab at Hegel's systematizing with the use of the word "unscientific" in the title. Unlike Hegel, he suggests, he will construct no wholes, no clean and fixed assessments of the past. In the course of his book, he then harangues Hegel for not understanding "history from the point of view of becoming, but with the illusion

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attached to pastness understands it from the point of view of a finality that excludes all becoming." Existence requires more than a speculative Idea, Kierkegaard argues. It requires an understanding of human beings, in process, experiencing their own lives individually. The knowledge that faith affords is radically different from that of objective logic, for faith is subject-centered, interested in establishing relationships that implicate individuals instead of distancing them from their subject matters. And these kinds of individualized relationships have no use for predetermined Systems. Indeed, Kierkegaard finds the notion of a system "comical" because it inherently fails to recognize the complexity and the internality of the human beings whom it purports to understand: "Reality itself is a system for God; but it cannot be a system for an existing spirit. System and finality correspond to one another, but existence is precisely the opposite of finality."

Kierkegaard's anti-Hegelian polemic is stark in this work, but it is difficult to escape the irony of the dialectic at play. In railing against Hegel's "objective" system, does Kierkegaard not create a "subjective" system of his own? In the process of arguing against a full-blown philosophy of existence, does he not develop his own detailed human anthropology and concomitant theology? Is he not offering an antithesis to Hegel's thesis? But Kierkegaard also seems to have a synthesis up his sleeve. Throughout his authorship, he discusses several "stages on life's way," or "spheres of existence"—aesthetic, ethical, and religious—that are constitutive of becoming a self. Religiousness is given priority, but all three modes of being interact in human subjectivity. There is a dialectical knot that lies at the heart of this unsystematic systematic philosophy.

Kierkegaard's complex relationship with Hegel was thus manifested in several ways: in his early praise for Hegel, in his adoption of Hegelian terms throughout his corpus, and in his performance of Hegelian triadic gestures despite his overt dismissal of Hegel. He wrestled with Hegel when accepting him and when rejecting him. As with Regine, in other words, Kierkegaard engaged, disengaged, and re-engaged with the philosophy of dialectic. Though he claimed to have broken his commitments, he was, in his way, a doubly married man, entangled in two intense lifelong relationships.

KIERKEGAARD'S PHILOSOPHY OF faith, as presented by the pseudonymous Johannes Climacus, reflects this same flirtation with marriage. "If I want to keep myself in faith," Climacus writes in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, "I must continually see to it that I hold fast the objective uncertainty." One does not cognitively arrive *at* faith by means of rational certainty, one lives *in* faith in the throes of uncertainty. To be in faith is to be in a relationship with God that is predicated upon the continual awareness that one cannot know God.

It is through doubt, then, that one finds faith. By struggling with what it would mean to be utterly committed to God, one unites with God. One invites God in just enough to cement the bond in the spaces that lie between belief and unbelief. For Climacus, as for Kierkegaard, he who is entrenched in the process of a religious relation is already on the inside of the conversation. And so a partial involvement effectively secures a full embrace. "To me an engagement was and is just as binding as a marriage...."

But surely this cannot be the end of the matter. Kierkegaard's arrangement is finally a little too tidy, even if it amounts to a celebration of the mess. It is important to remember that, strictly speaking, he never really got the girl. Engagement did not gain him marriage; it gained him only eternal attachment (and prodigious literary energy). And so we must wonder whether the conflation of engagement and marriage is really a matter of philosophical import, or just an idiosyncrasy of a thinker's temperament that makes him unusually interesting for biography.

In order to think critically about Kierkegaard's thought, one must resist the spell of the Kierkegaardian mood, and worry a little about logic. Kierkegaard, famous for his "leap of faith," may have leaped a little too far, for it is logically untenable to get rid of the question of God's existence and still end up with a relation that presumes God's existence. No matter how much Kierkegaard wanted to turn the focus of religion toward the religious subject, there still must be a religious object. Either there is a divine being who exists outside oneself or there is not. Epistemology may not be the only point, but it is not beside the point.

In building faith out of doubt, Kierkegaard made the absence of God look like the presence of God. He constructed a theology wherein one has full faith precisely where one does not have full faith. This, to put it mildly, is slippery, and lends itself to a theological demagoguery. For engaging with possibility is not the same thing as asserting definitively. Entertaining marriage is emphatically not the same thing as marrying. The dialectical lover and the dialectical thinker lived and died a bachelor after all. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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Bill Clinton's approach to health care reform may have been ham-handed, but the effort was well conceived. Jonathan Cohn ably surfaces the economic challenges facing health care, but the system demands far more than corrective financial measures.

JAMES P. WHALEN, M.D.
Oak Park, Illinois

Identity card

TO THE EDITORS:

I read Sarah Wildman's Washington Diarist on "South Asians" with great interest ("All for One," December 24, 2001). Incredibly, I agree with all the viewpoints in it! I am a professor at NYU and have an American family. At the same time, I am a Kashmiri, an Indian, and therefore, South Asian. I've been in the United States for 25 years, first as a student and then as a professional, so I am also very American. While all of what Wildman says is true, I think the divisions are deeper than she and some of her interviewees acknowledge. The divisions—especially among first-generationers like myself—run along socioeconomic and class lines (even more so than religious ones). In contrast, second-generation South Asians identify more with the term because they generally have a weaker connection to the "home" identity.

VASANT DHAR
New York, New York

TO THE EDITORS:

I am an Indian and Hindu-American, born and raised in this country. I do not readily identify myself as a South Asian. There are more differences between me and a fundamentalist Muslim from Pakistan than a Tibetan Buddhist. This identity is not just shared by the older, immigrant generation, but many in my generation as well. True, recent events have brought South Asians together, but they have not brushed aside the issue of religious pluralism. I do not believe that our world in the future will be so naïve as to build alliances along regional lines as those who promote the South Asian identity do. Rather, alliances will be built on mutual and shared ideas and philosophies. In that, broad-minded Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and others have a lot to share.

MIHIR MEGHANI, M.D.
Fremont, California

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Foresight

I HAVE BEEN THE NEW REPUBLIC's steward for nearly 28 years. And so I know quite a lot about its history—the moments when it was bravely honest, and the moments when it was thinly righteous. The magazine has committed, at times, massive errors of judgment. Its editors' commitment, for example, to a mechanistic notion of industrial efficiency and a simple-minded notion of equal social outcomes led to an on-and-off-again dalliance with communism. The more recent past has produced other, if less momentous, moral errors.

BUT LAST WEEK I CAME ACROSS THE August 25, 1941, issue, and a shiver of institutional pride ran down my spine. The editorial—written fully three and a half months before Pearl Harbor—was entitled, "For a Declaration of War." It began on the cover and went on to argue for immediate armed combat against the Axis powers. At a time when even those Americans sympathetic to the Allies' cause were arguing that Washington should do little more than send Britain old destroyers and woolen socks, this was an unpopular position, and an inspiring one. Reading the editorial some 60 years later, one can see clearly how grievously the United States erred in waiting to be attacked before it deployed and fought.

DEMOCRACIES ARE LOATH TO ADMIT that they provoke zealous enemies. This is certainly true today, as the Fourth Estate insists that despite the palpable enthusiasm for Osama bin Laden across the Muslim world (this weekend *The New York Times* reported that a classified poll of educated Saudis between the ages of 25 and 41 showed that 95 percent of them supported bin Laden's cause), modern Islam is overwhelmingly tolerant and peaceful. Some people live by the sword and others live by the word. Alas, many of the latter in highbrow American journalism live by the mendacious word or, at best, the platitudinous one. They provide comforting assurances of the universality of desire: Everybody wants the same things, and if everybody had them there'd be peace.

CONSIDER LAST FRIDAY'S *NEW YORK Times*, which featured Serge Schmemann's stunningly patronizing review of *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, the new book by the stunningly learned Princeton professor Bernard Lewis. Schmemann objected to the fact that the book is really "a compilation of lectures and articles" from the last two decades. Thus, it does not and cannot give what the title implicitly promises: "convincing answers to the riddles of September 11." But for a scholar like Lewis, September 11 did not raise many fresh questions. After all, Lewis understood the ideology behind the World Trade Center attack before it happened. Bin Laden and his supporters emerged organically from a living Islam that Lewis has spent his life trying to interpret. Schmemann takes exception to this "affirmation" by Lewis: "By all the standards that matter in the modern world—economic development and job creation, literacy and educational and scientific achievement, political freedom and respect for human rights—what was once a mighty civilization has indeed fallen low." Which of those excellences, precisely, does Schmemann see in the Muslim world? And if such a remark is controversial, then on the basis of what more penetrating truth can the Muslim world reform itself and improve the lives of its people? Schmemann's credential for reviewing the Lewis book is that he spent the mid-1990s as the *Times*' Jerusalem bureau chief. He wasn't a notably hostile observer of that country. But he saw—as did virtually all his *Times* colleagues before and after him—the confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians as just another nasty encounter between two peoples. Lewis understands that it is embedded in a larger struggle: between those who seek to resolve conflicts politically, which means through compromise, and those who seek to resolve conflicts through violence.

A CHEEKY FRIEND OF MINE REFERS to NPR as "National Palestine Radio." For NPR, this is *not* just another nasty encounter between two peoples. It is a tale of good and evil, the weak and the strong, the largely innocent Palestinian victims, and the aggressive and unmoving Israelis. CAMERA (The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America) last year published a devastating report on NPR's coverage of the conflict, and I am not surprised. You see, NPR's foreign editor, the virulently anti-Israel Loren Jenkins, has been on my radar for almost 20 years. I wrote about him 18 years ago (May 16, 1983), after he'd won a Pulitzer for some *Washington Post* articles he'd written on the Sabra and Shatila massacres. That the Jews were entirely to blame for Christians killing Muslims was a widely supported, if wildly illogical, axiom of the time. But Jenkins was after the specific identity of the Christian killers and, in the days following the massacres, he was quick to fix primary blame on Major Saad Haddad, who commanded an Israeli-backed force of between 1,000 to 1,500 Lebanese Christians. Haddad's forces, the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA), he alleged, committed the atrocities in conjunction with breakaway elements of the Maronite Catholic militia, the Phalange. Jenkins reported that the SLA had come from the South to invade the camp. But an Israeli commission, quite severe with Israel itself, showed that the SLA was ensconced on the opposite bank of the Awali River during the massacres. Jenkins eventually acknowledged that Major Haddad played no role in the massacres and it wasn't breakaway Phalange who committed the murders, but its mainstream, under the command of a young warlord named Elie Hobeika. (There were plenty of Shia in Hobeika's militia as well, but that complicated the reporter's story: Why would Muslims murder Palestinian fellow Muslims?)

THESE TWO-DECADES-OLD MEMORIES flooded back when I read a few days ago that Hobeika had been killed by a car bomb in Beirut. This was the kind of death he'd meted out routinely to his enemies. His mother and 300 other mourners wept at his church funeral. But his butchery hadn't denied him entry into Lebanon's power elite. He had spent the ensuing years as minister of this and that in several Lebanese governments, and at the end was part of the informal cabal that actually ran the country for Syria (under the careful watch of 25,000 of Bashar al-Assad's troops).

TWO WEEKS AGO I WROTE ABOUT MY trip ten years ago to Saudi Arabia, and my impressions were largely of hypocrisy. But there is one particular hypocrisy that I failed to mention. The Saudi ruling family does a lot of public worrying about the Palestinians—last weekend in the *Times* and *The Washington Post* it once again berated the United States for not sufficiently bowing to their needs and demands (which it usually conflates). So how many Palestinians has it taken in? I asked my princely hosts. Fifteen thousand, said one. Twenty-five thousand, said another sternly. (This, in a country with several million foreign workers.) Why so few? I asked. "Because," said a third, "we don't want too many Palestinians here. They are troublemakers. We accept only those who have married Saudi men and, of course, those we need—mostly teachers and doctors." It was a disturbing revelation, and an important one. And don't expect to hear it on NPR.

MARTIN PERETZ

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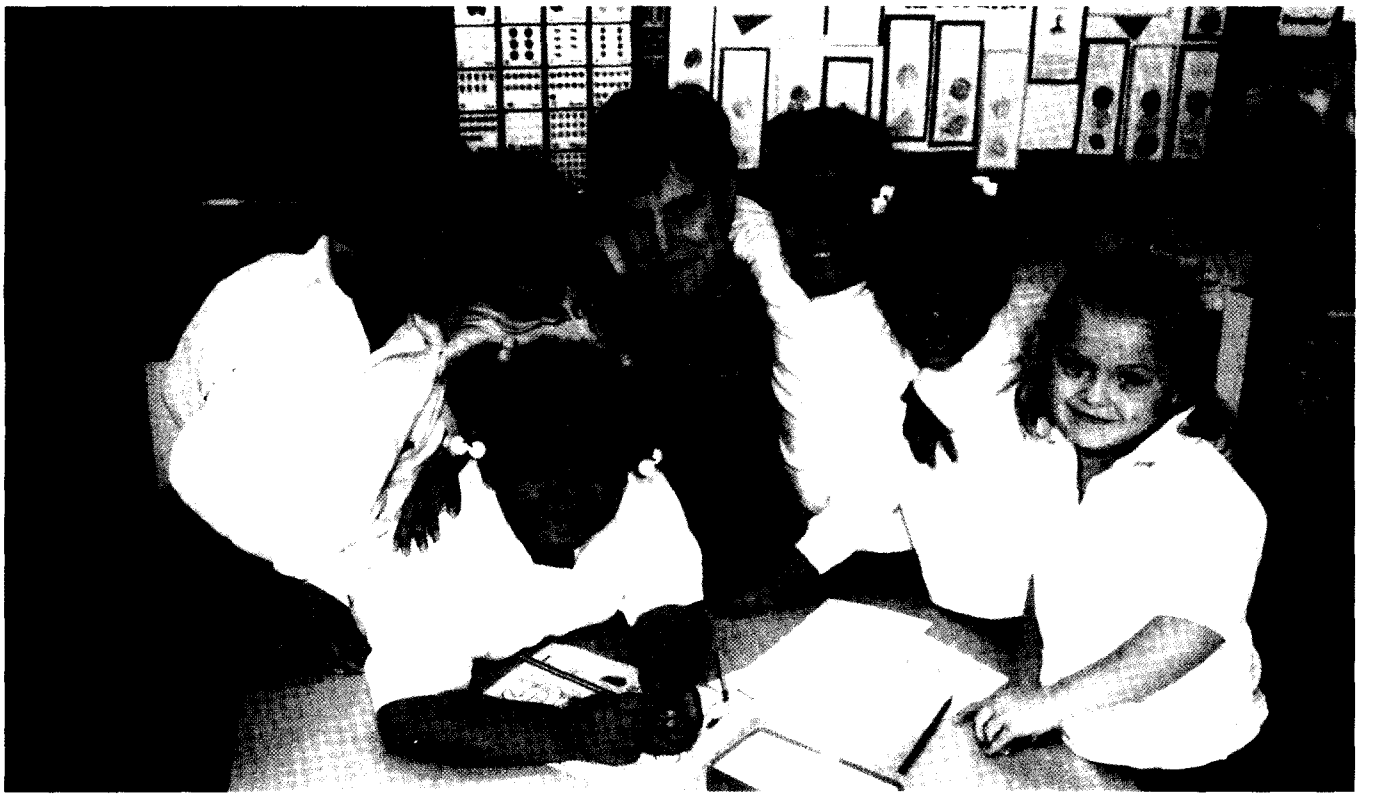

Evidence: With More Choices, Milwaukee's Public Schools Are Stronger

The academic achievement of Milwaukee public school students has improved during a time of rapidly expanding educational options, according to new data from an elected member of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Board of Directors.

A report from MPS Director John Gardner shows that the percent of students scoring proficient on state tests grew in all 15 grade and subject categories between 1998 and 2001. The gains came even as MPS educated more students who live in poverty or come from racial and ethnic minority groups. During the period of these gains, Milwaukee experienced rapid growth in tax-supported school voucher and charter school programs.

Parental School Choice is Widespread — Unless You're Poor.

Gardner's report, *Milwaukee's Public Schools: The Untold Story of America's Newest Democratic Revolution*, provides other evidence contradicting predictions that expanded school choice would hurt public schools. For example, MPS per pupil spending has grown, not declined and its enrollment is up, not down.

Reacting to the new report, two longtime school choice critics acknowledged that MPS has responded positively to expanded choice.

Wisconsin State Representative Christine Sinicki, a Democrat from Milwaukee, told *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "If John Gardner believes the school district has improved, the public can believe it...I really hate to say this because I'm not a choice supporter, but I do think that the threat of choice did force the public school system to make...changes." Sinicki is a former member of the MPS School Board.

MPS teacher Bob Peterson, a *Rethinking Schools* editor and school choice critic, told Wisconsin Public Radio that, like Sinicki, he believed choice had been a factor encouraging positive change at MPS.

Gardner's findings are consistent with independent research by Harvard economist Caroline Hoxby, who has found a positive public school response to voucher and charter programs in Milwaukee, Michigan, and Arizona. A separate analysis by *USA Today* also has found improvements in the academic achievement and fiscal condition of Milwaukee's schools.

The Gardner report is posted under Hot Topics at www.SchoolChoiceInfo.org. The site also contains information on the Hoxby study and the USA Today *analysis.*

baeo
Black Alliance for Educational Options

For more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org or www.baeo.org

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